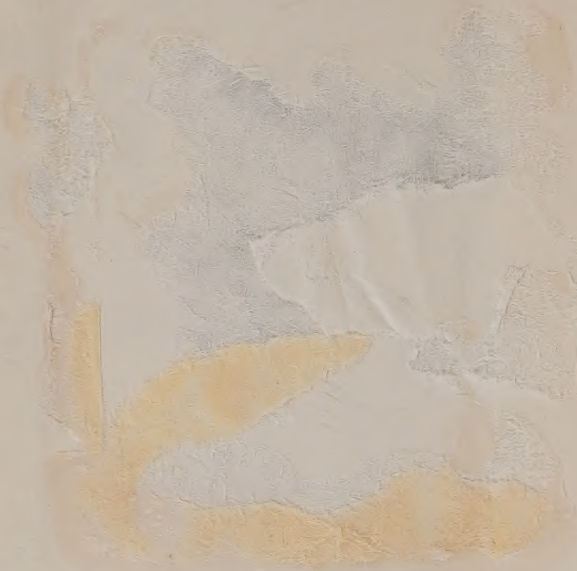

A GUIDE TO THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

A GUIDE TO

The Ring of the Nibelung

THE TRILOGY OF
RICHARD WAGNER

ITS ORIGIN, STORY, AND MUSIC

BY

RICHARD ALDRICH

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TO THE CHÂTELAINE

A. A.

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

Bar Harbor, August, 1905

PREFACE

To endeavor to say much that is new or original about "The Ring of the Nibelung" would be a rash undertaking at this day. This little book is not such an undertaking. Its presentation of the origin, source, and musical structure of Wagner's great trilogy is founded largely upon the labors of others. The author acknowledges a deep indebtedness to Hans von Wolzogen's thematic analysis, to Mr. Henderson's and Mr. Finck's biographies of the master, to Miss Weston's discussion of the legends, to Mr. Krehbiel's "Studies," and to other works in less degree.

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INTRODUCTORY

"The Ring of the Nibelung" is in many respects, the most important and original of the works of Wagner as a musical dramatist. It is the greatest in its proportions; the prelude and the three dramas composing it, "The Rhine Gold," "The Valkyrie," "Siegfried," and "The Dusk of the Gods," are formed on the model of the trilogies of the great Greek dramatists. Like them, Wagner's trilogy goes far beyond the more obvious and diverting functions of the theater, to embody in dramatic form a philosophy, a statement of some of the great underlying forces, the ethical principles of human life. And it marks the first complete achievement by Wagner of his own distinctive style as a lyric dramatist; a style involving a complete breaking with all the methods and traditions of operatic art as he found them, and the establishment of new ideals, new æsthetic principles, new methods of expression, a new technique in all the artistic factors that cooperate in the production of a lyric drama. These ideals, principles, and methods have taken firm hold of modern art; no composer can henceforth wholly escape from their influence, and the whole structure of modern music has felt in some degree, the transforming power that Wagner first definitely exercised in the music of "The Ring of the Nibelung."

"Even during the composition of 'Lohengrin' . . . the subjects of Siegfried and Friedrich Rothbart (Barbarossa) had usurped my fancy," wrote Wagner in his "Communication to my Friends." He had finished "Lohengrin" in 1848. Through his studies for this and for "Tannhäuser," the great world of the Teutonic legends had been disclosed to him, and he had come to the perception of the inestimable value of these legends to the musical dramatist. He had made his experiment with the opera based on the historical subject in "Rienzi"; and he had dallied with ideas of other such operas and dramas, only to become convinced of the impossibility of treating historical details in musical drama. He had prepared sketches and memoranda for a prose drama on the subject of Frederick Barbarossa. His studies carried him far into the whole matter of mythological as against historical subjects for operatic treatment; the main outcome of it all was that he found he could not give the hero, as he conceived him, an historical background fitting and proper and accurate, without overloading the whole with a mass of detail. A further and more exhaustive study of the point involved was the immediate result of this abortive attempt. It was embodied in the essay entitled "Die Wibelungen — Weltgeschichte aus der Saga" (The Wibelungs — World History from the Saga), written in 1848, published in 1850. In this he undertakes a discussion of the part tradition has played in the history of the world, and attempts to show how history and mythology agree in certain elementary

facts. In "The Flying Dutchman" he had first come to feel how music should be evolved from the situations and requirements of the action upon the stage. With "Tannhäuser" a broader conception of the musical drama had taken shape in his mind, a more appropriate fitting of the music to the poetical and dramatic content; and in "Lohengrin" he had made a still further advance in this direction. The conception of "The Ring of the Nibelung" was the next step in his artistic development, attained only after philosophic reflection and gradual elaboration of artistic and theoretical premises. The revolutionary and epoch-making ideas which so mightily stirred his mind and found their embodiment in this work, were formulated and liberated in a series of great essays published in the course of the next few years, for a considerable period interrupting his purely musical work. They expounded the theories upon which he was proceeding, and they express, as perhaps has been expressed by no other creative artist, the great underlying principles, the æsthetic foundations, upon which he built. "Art and Revolution" (1849), "The Art Work of the Future," "Art and Climate" (1850), "Opera and Drama" (1852), especially the last, gave the most detailed and comprehensive utterance to the new ideas that were seething in his brain.

A GUIDE TO THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG

PART I

THE COMPOSITION AND SOURCES OF THE TRILOGY

"I SHALL employ my time in setting to music my latest German drama, 'The Death of Siegfried.' Within half a year I shall send you the opera complete." These were the words in which Wagner first notified to his friend Franz Liszt, in June, 1849, the new project for an opera which he had in mind. Twenty-five years were to pass, however, and many vicissitudes were to befall the composer before the project was to reach its completion; and the plan itself was to undergo a striking process of transformation and development. The tenacity with which the composer adhered to his own ideals, and the unfaltering courage and conviction with which he kept to his self-appointed path, are a part of one of the most remarkable chapters of artistic biography.

The drama based on the Siegfried legends that had occurred to Wagner while he was at work on "Lohengrin" he intended to call "Siegfried's Death." It was to embrace in a general way that portion of the story now told in "The Dusk of the Gods." He began the poem in 1848, and finished it in the autumn of that year, having first

formulated its bearing in an essay entitled "The Nibelung Myth as Sketch for a Drama." This dramatic poem in its first form, was never set to music. He soon found that it was impossible to condense into a single drama the story of the hero's death and the causes that led to it; and his decision resulted in many changes of the outlines of his plan and revisions of its details. His first intention was to precede "Siegfried's Death" with a preliminary drama, "Young Siegfried" — so he wrote to Liszt in 1851, saying that, "in it everything that in 'Siegfried's Death' was either narrated or more or less taken for granted, was to be shown in bold and vivid outline by means of actual representation.[1] But again he found that he had not calculated sufficiently on the development of his material. He writes in the same letter to Liszt thus:

The "Young Siegfried" as a separate entity, cannot produce its proper and sure impression until it occupies its necessary place in a complete whole, a place to which I now assign it, together with "Siegfried's Death," in my newly designed plan. . . . That plan extends to three dramas: 1. The "Valkyrie"; 2. "Young Siegfried"; 3. "Siegfried's Death." In order to give everything completely, these three dramas must be preceded by a grand introductory play, "The Rape of the Rhine Gold." The object is the complete representation of everything in regard to this rape: the origin of the Nibelung treasure, the possession of that treasure by Wotan, and the curse of Alberich, which in "Young Siegfried" occur in the form of a narrative. By the distinctness of representation which is thus made possible and which, at the same time, does

[1] "Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt," translated by Francis Hueffer, vol. 1, p. 170.

away with everything in the nature of a lengthy narrative, or at least condenses it in a few pregnant movements, I gain sufficient space to intensify the wealth of relations, while in the previous semi-epical mode of treatment I was compelled to cut down and enfeeble all this.

In the meantime, Wagner's personal fortunes had undergone deplorable vicissitudes. The period of the composition of "The Ring of the Nibelung" coincides with the most stormy, distressful, and disheartening years of his kaleidoscopic career. They were years of exciting adventure, personal danger, actual need, and an intellectual isolation that is brought only into greater relief by the noble and beautiful sympathy and support given him by a very few devoted friends. He had already got so far as to finish the poem of his first conceived Siegfried drama, when, in 1849, while he was still Kapellmeister, or conductor, of the Royal Opera of Dresden, the revolution came, in which he felt an active sympathy, and in favor of which he wrote and spoke. There was an outbreak, and the revolutionaries were put to flight. Among those who fled was Wagner; and his flight was soon followed by a decree of banishment from German territory. He went to Zurich, where he spent the next ensuing years. Here he lived often in great embarrassment for the needful things of life, and in profound depression of spirits. He received assistance and encouragement from Franz Liszt, great pianist and great musician, then conductor of the Grand Ducal court at Weimar, whose appreciation of Wagner's great qualities and devoted friendship

to him form one of the most beautiful episodes in the history of art. He was also later sympathetically received by Otto Wesendonck and his wife, music lovers and admirers of his work, who provided him with a châlet overlooking the lake, where he lived and labored.

He made a brief visit to Paris, to endeavor once more to secure the performance of some of his operas. Failing in this, he returned to Zurich, where he found himself absolutely without means, except for the benefactions of Liszt and a few others to whom he was not backward in appealing. His "Lohengrin" had not yet been produced, and one of the few gleams of hope that came to him was the news of its performance in Weimar, in 1850, through the efforts of the devoted Liszt. He wished to begin work on his "Siegfried" drama; the music, he wrote Liszt in August, 1850, was "vibrating through all his nerves"; but a year or more was to pass, in which he "cleared his mind," as he expressed it, by the writing of the vigorous theoretical essays that we have mentioned. In the spring of 1851, after waiting for the bright, sunny weather that he needed to spur him on, he began serious work on the "Young Siegfried."

He wrought with burning enthusiasm and an intense belief in what he was doing. In June, of 1851, he had completed the poem. "Lord, how delighted I am with 'Young Siegfried'!" he wrote to Liszt in July; and the next month he intended to "rush at the music." But he found much revision necessary to settle the relations of the newly

adjusted scheme. We find him still working on it in November, 1852, as he writes to Uhlig, ecstatically exclaiming that, when he has finished, "the whole will be — I am impudent enough to say it — the greatest poem ever written!" The chronological sequence of his work is a little confused, and difficult to follow in his letters, owing to the frequent revisions it underwent. In December, 1852, he reports to Ferdinand Heine that he has just finished his great "Nibelung" poem. Much work on the music of the two Siegfried dramas had already been done; but much had to be done over again. In November, 1853, he began work on the music for "The Rhine Gold." He finished the sketch in January of the next year, and the instrumentation at the end of May. "The Valkyrie" music he began in June, 1854: "it deliciously pervades all my limbs," he wrote. His work on it was interrupted by the journey he made in that year to London to conduct the concerts of the Philharmonic Society. Not till April, 1856, could he report to his faithful friends the completion of it — and it turned out "remarkably beautiful," as he confided to Wilhelm Fischer; he had done "nothing like the first act, or approaching it, before," he wrote to Liszt. The whole was "the most tragic he had ever conceived."

Illness and despondency delayed its completion. Wagner suffered continually from erysipelas, and his letters of this period are full of the gloom that his dejection and inability to carry on sustained work caused him. At this time he received an

offer from New York to come to America to conduct a series of concerts, which would have brought him $10,000; but he could not interrupt his work to make money. It would be absurd to sacrifice his best vital powers, he declared, even in his helpless pecuniary position, to so miserable a purpose. "Good heavens! such sums as I might *earn* in America people ought to *give* me, without asking anything in return, beyond what I am actually doing, and which is the best I can do." Nevertheless, it was a terrible temptation; and a little later it would have been perhaps a worse one.

The composer began the music for the new "Siegfried" in January, 1857, and in May he could write to Liszt that the first act was done, written in the little villa that the Wesendoncks had put at his disposal near their own country house. Here was a great amelioration of his physical surroundings; but his discouragement at the prospects for the great work he was engaged on had now reached the breaking point. Negotiations with the firm of Breitkopf and Härtel for publishing it had been unsuccessful, even with the aid of Liszt's powerful influence. Wagner wrote to this devoted friend in June, 1857, that he had determined to abandon his "headstrong design" of completing the "Nibelungen." "I have led my 'Young Siegfried' to a beautiful forest solitude, and there have left him under a linden tree, and take leave of him with heartfelt tears." He had resolved to complete "Tristan and Isolde" "on a moderate scale" so as to make its per-

formance easier in the lesser German theaters — Heaven save the mark! — and also formed the strange purpose of sending it to Rio Janeiro to have it produced there in an Italian translation. The decision cost him many pangs, for he was at the summit of his musical inspiration when he put aside "Siegfried" in the middle of the second act; but he was wearied of "piling up one silent score upon another," and wished to see some results.

The next following years were years of distress and wandering. In 1860, the edict of banishment against Wagner was cancelled, and he was allowed to return to Germany. In various German cities and in Paris he occupied himself with fruitless endeavors to secure performances of his works — his attempts in Paris resulting in the famous fiasco of "Tannhäuser," in 1861. He also devoted himself to the completion of "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg," his only comic opera which, it is worthy of note, was the fruit of the darkest period of his life. He was harassed by creditors, persecuted and ridiculed by the newspaper critics, neglected by the managers, and unable to bring his work before any portion of the public that could understand it. He became a prey to despair. Finally, while he was working on the immortal music of "The Mastersingers" in a refuge at Zurich, provided for him by one of his few loyal friends, he heard that his Viennese creditors were on his track, and took a hasty flight. But it was the darkest hour before the dawn.

Young Ludwig II had just ascended the throne of Bavaria, a music-loving prince with high ideals as to a prince's duty in forwarding art. He knew Wagner's work and admired it. He sent a messenger to find him and to induce him to come to Munich, there to work undisturbed under his own royal protection and encouragement. He gave him a villa, where he was to finish his long abandoned "Nibelung" Trilogy; and, best of all, he offered him the splendid resources of the court opera for the proper production of his works under his own direction. In the spring of 1864, Wagner entered into the enjoyment of these blessings. "Tristan" was produced in 1865, and in 1868, "The Mastersingers." The intervening years, however, were troublous. A strong feeling was fomented in Munich against Wagner and the young king's outlay on his behalf, and he was obliged to leave the capital, ultimately settling in Bayreuth. But Ludwig's support was unswerving, and his desire to hear the yet unperformed "Nibelung" dramas, intense. "The Rhine Gold" was produced at the Royal Opera in 1869, and "The Valkyrie" in 1870, but against Wagner's wishes and without his coöperation; and as the preparations were insufficient, the works were not fairly represented, and the success was small. Wagner's long cherished plans for a special festival theater expressly for the performance of his works — plans on which he had been constantly harping in the old dark days — were in the way of fulfillment. The famous festival playhouse at Bayreuth was their outcome. It was begun in

1872. The project met with many financial difficulties, which it took years of disheartening toil on the part of the composer and his friends to overcome. His work on the rest of the "Nibelung" dramas had been going on under the new and favorable conditions in which Wagner found himself. He had again taken up "Siegfried," directly upon his arrival in Munich, in 1864, after an interruption of seven years, and after another interruption during which he finished "The Mastersingers," he finished the second act in June, 1865, and the third in 1869. He began the music of "The Dusk of the Gods" in 1870, while he was sojourning at Lucerne, whither he had gone after his retirement from Munich to relieve the king of embarrassment. He completed it in Bayreuth in November, 1874. The next two years were consumed in the anxious efforts to raise money for the new festival playhouse. Though they were only partially successful, the whole Trilogy was put into rehearsal in 1875. The best singers of Germany responded to the master's appeal, and many of the finest orchestral players from various opera houses were gathered for the orchestra. Hans Richter, one of the most devoted of Wagner's followers, was the conductor, but Wagner himself directed and inspired all the rehearsals. The great day came on August 13, 1876, when the festival playhouse was opened with the first production of "The Rhine Gold" as the prelude to the Trilogy as a whole. A great and distinguished assemblage of musicians, critics, and amateurs from almost all the countries

of the globe, was present, and the event was observed and chronicled as of the epoch-making importance that it truly was. "The Valkyrie" was given on August 13, "Siegfried," on August 16, "The Dusk of the Gods," on August 17. The last two were heard for the first time, the first two having been performed separately against Wagner's wishes and intentions, as before mentioned, in Munich. Thus were crowned the efforts and aspirations of more than a quarter of a century in Wagner's life, and thus was first made known what is undoubtedly his supreme achievement in art.

The first performances in America of the dramas constituting "The Ring of the Nibelung," were as follows:

"The Rhine Gold:" At the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, January 4, 1889, under the direction of Anton Seidl.

"The Valkyrie:" At the Academy of Music, New York, April 2, 1877, under the direction of Adolf Neuendorff.

"Siegfried:" At the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, November 9, 1887, under the direction of Anton Seidl.

"The Dusk of the Gods:" At the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, January 25, 1888, under the direction of Anton Seidl.

THE SOURCES OF THE TRILOGY

The Siegfried legend is a primeval heritage of the Teutonic races, brought by them from the home of the Aryan people. It is impossible here to go into an examination of what the philologers and students of mythology have discovered about it and theorized about it. It is enough to say that, though it dealt originally with a mythical hero, and in this form was well known and popular by the fifth century, at about that time it became involved with a certain historical element and thereby modified. The latter part of the Siegfried story is connected with the invasion of the Huns and the death of Attila. In this form the story traveled north and became popular with the Scandinavian peoples, undergoing, naturally enough, further modifications in its travels and taking on special features characteristic of Northern influence. There are, thus, two forms in which this legend or series of legends are preserved: the German and the Scandinavian. In Germany the legends, after centuries of traditional transmission by bards and minstrels, were embodied finally in the "Nibelungenlied," a poem dating from the latter half of the twelfth century, that has its permanent place in literature as the national epic of the German peoples. This poem shows great transformations in the legends it recounts — a loss of the earlier mythical elements, a development of the historical traits. The earlier incidents of the hero's career are forgotten or merely mentioned; the later are more circumstan-

tially told. The mythical features still survived by oral tradition, in folk tales. They were chiefly preserved, however, in the written records that were made of the legends in the Scandinavian countries — the several "Sagas": the Volsunga Saga, the Thidrek Saga and others, and in the Icelandic Eddas. These ancient writings, the "Nibelungenlied," the Sagas, and the two Eddas, are the sources from which Wagner derived his conception of the Nibelungen dramas. They tell the story with many differences and divergences, not only of incident and detail, but also of plan and design, of characters involved, of motive and shaping forces. The characters are innumerable, the narratives lavish in incidents.

From these diverse sources Wagner appropriated the material of his great Trilogy; but with the prescience of a philosopher, the far-seeing vision of a poet, the instinct of a dramatist. He was concerned to make his work exhibit the workings of fate through the medium and motives of human attributes; to express a philosophical view of life in terms of the drama, as the Greeks did in tragedy. In working and shaping that material Wagner eliminated much, elaborated much, charged his personages and their actions with a new significance unknown to the old myth-makers and recounters of legends. He has chosen but a few of the people of the ancient tales to carry on the burden of his action, and he has in many cases altered the posture of circumstances, the succession of incidents and the interrelation of persons and events. A comparison of his work

with that of the huge mass of fable shows how it has been transformed and transfigured by the touch of a great master.

The Scandinavian bards, having derived many or most of their ideas from Germany, presented them saturated with the Norse spirit, and projected them against a background of Norse mythology. The Volsunga Saga tells of Volsung, the son of Rerir, who was the son of Sigi, who was the son of Odin, the god. Volsung was a great king, with ten sons and one daughter. He lived in a palace built around an oak tree, called the Branstock, whose branches pierced the roof. The eldest son and daughter were twins, Sigmund and Signy. King Siggeir, of Gothland, wedded Signy; to the marriage feast came an old man, one eyed, who thrust a sword into the Branstock that none could draw forth, till Sigmund did it. At this Siggeir was jealous, and having offered money for the sword in vain, became angry. When he returned to his own land with Signy, he invited Volsung and his sons to visit him; and when they came, fell upon them, slew Volsung and left his sons in the woods to be devoured by wolves. Sigmund escaped and dwelt there. Siggeir thought all the Volsungs were dead, but Signy, desiring to avenge their slaughter, and knowing of Sigmund's escape, went, transformed by a witch's power, to Sigmund's hut. She lay with him for three nights, and bore a son whom she called Sinfjotli. When he was grown, she sent him to live with Sigmund. The two went to Siggeir's hall and slew him, and then Signy, revealing the

fact that Sinfjotli was a full-blooded Volsung, died with her husband.

Sigmund married Borghild, who poisoned Sinfjotli, wherefore he put her away, and married Hjordis, whom Lyngi, son of Hunding, had wooed in vain. So Lyngi made war on them, and Sigmund did great deeds, but his sword was broken on the spear of an old, one-eyed man, and he was killed. Dying, he gave the pieces of his sword to Hjordis, to give to her unborn son, who would be the noblest and greatest of the Volsungs. That son, born at the court of the Danish king, was called Sigurd. He grew up at court under the tutelage of Regin, a wise and famous smith. One day he sent Sigurd to the woods to choose a horse, which he did under the direction of an old man with one eye; the horse he chose was Grani, of the strain of Odin's stables. Then Regin told him of a dragon, Fafnir, who had measureless stores of gold, which he bade him go and win for himself. This was the story of this gold: Hreidmar had three sons, Fafnir, Otter, and Regin. Otter used to take the form of an otter, and so catch fish. One day Odin, Hönir, and Loki passed by, and Loki threw a stone and killed the otter. He skinned it and they went to the house of Hreidmar, who recognized the skin, and demanded a ransom that should consist of as much gold as would fill the skin and cover it standing upright. The dwarf, Andvari, dwelling in the lake, had great stores of gold; so Loki went back and caught the dwarf as he was swimming in the form of a pike, and would not release him

till he had given him all his gold and the ring, by whose power the gold was increased. Andvari, in rage, cursed the gold and the ring, so that they should bring death on everyone who possessed them. This gold Loki then took to Hreidmir, and with it they tried to cover the otter skin; but he saw one hair of the otter's muzzle, to cover which they must add the ring. Loki told of the curse and bade them beware; and immediately it was operative, for Fafnir slew his father for the gold, and Regin, who was the other son, got nothing of it. Fafnir took the shape of a great dragon and guarded the treasure.

Having learned this, Sigurd bade Regin forge a sword with which he would slay the dragon and avenge him; but Regin could forge no sword that Sigurd did not immediately break. Then Sigurd went to his mother and got from her the fragments of his father's sword, which Regin forged into the wonderful weapon called Gram, the best of all swords. But before attacking the dragon, Sigurd went forth to fight the sons of Hunding, to avenge his father's death. Then Regin and Sigurd went to slay Fafnir; but Regin was treacherous, and sought to kill Sigurd and win the treasure for himself. The dragon slain, Sigurd accidentally touched his blood, and when he laid his finger to his mouth, he understood the birds chattering of Regin's treachery, and of how he should kill Regin, and of the ring of fire around Hindfell, and of Brynhild who slept within it. Then he drew his sword and smote off Regin's head, and heaping Fafnir's gold upon Grani, rode

forth to Hindfell, where he penetrated the fiery barrier and found the maid sleeping. He waked her and she knew him, and told him that she was Odin's child, a Valkyrie; and because she had disobeyed Odin and chosen for the victory one whom he had willed to be slain, Odin had put her into a magic slumber and fated her to become a mortal woman, and to wed; but that she had vowed to wed only one who had known no fear. She taught him all her wisdom and they plighted their faith, for which he gave her Andvari's ring. When he went forth again he reached the realm of Giuki, who ruled south of the Rhine, and who had a wife, Grimhild, skilled in magic, and three sons, Gunnar, Hogni, and Guttorm, and one daughter, Gudrun. There he abode many days, and Grimhild mixed a magic drink, which when Sigurd tasted, he forgot Brynhild and his plighted troth. He swore blood-brotherhood with Gunnar and Hogni, and, in accordance with Grimhild's purpose, wedded Gudrun, and dwelt in the hall of the Niflungs. Then Grimhild urged her son Gunnar to win Brynhild, and Gunnar, Hogni, and Sigurd rode forth to Hindfell. Gunnar could not enter the ring of fire, but he changed shapes with Sigurd, as Grimhild had taught them how to do, and Sigurd, in his semblance, rode through the flames and won Brynhild for Gunnar's wife. For she had sworn to wed him who could pierce that circle of fire, though she deemed that none but Sigurd could do this. He took from her Andvari's ring and her girdle, and gave them to Gudrun, and Brynhild went to the land of the

Niflungs as Gunnar's wife. And when the wedding feast was over, Sigurd remembered all, but said nothing. Later, when the two women fell into a dispute as to whose husband was the greater, Gudrun, in her anger, disclosed the secret, how Sigurd had won Brynhild for Gunnar. Brynhild in wrath conspired with Gunnar and Hogni to kill Sigurd; but they were restrained by their oath of blood-brotherhood, so Guttorm, who had not taken that oath, did the deed, and killed Sigurd as he lay asleep in his bed. Brynhild bade Gunnar build a funeral pyre and laid herself on it beside Sigurd's body, and, she having killed herself with a sword, they were burned together.

The rest of the Saga tells how Gudrun wedded Atli, Attila, the Hun, of history — and went with him to his own land; and how Atli schemed to get possession of the treasure, but Gunnar and Hogni threw the gold into the Rhine, for which they were slain by the avaricious king. And the end was the vengeance of Gudrun, through her brother, Hogni's son, Niflung, and her miraculous transportation to the land of Jonakr, whom she wedded and to whom she bore three sons.

The Thidrek Saga tells a similar story, and is evidently derived from the same source as the Volsunga Saga; yet there are many variations in important particulars, the most significant of which relates to Sigurd's birth and bringing up, and to the origin and disposition of the treasure.

The Nibelungenlied is less primitive in its character than either of these Sagas, and has much in relation to Attila and the Burgundian kings, and

little in relation to the mythological features that appear in the Scandinavian stories of Siegfried. In this, Siegfried, son of King Sigmund and Sieglinde who reigned in the Rhenish Netherlands, sets out to win for his wife the beautiful Kriemhild, dwelling at Worms. Her brother Gunther refused to grant him her hand, but offered him hospitality. None knew him but Hagen, one of the vassals, who had heard how Siegfried had won the Nibelung Hoard from the brothers Schilbung and Nibelung. They had asked Siegfried to divide it for them, and offered him the good sword Balmung in payment. But, being dissatisfied with his award, they fell upon him; so Siegfried slew them, and having also overthrown Alberich and won from him the Tarnhelm, he took the hoard for himself and left it in the care of Alberich, who had sworn fidelity to him. Now Gunther wished for his wife, the beautiful Brunhild, queen of Island, and Siegfried promised to help him if Gunther would give him Kriemhild to wife; and they swore this. Brunhild was the strongest of women, and would be won only in trials of strength. Siegfried, posing as his friend's vassal, won her by the aid of the Tarnhelm, in the guise of Gunther, who thereupon married her, and Siegfried must overcome Brunhild on her wedding night, in behalf of Gunther (as he does in the Thidrek Saga). Brunhild deemed it unworthy that her husband should wed his sister to a vassal, and spoke scornful words to Kriemhild. Thereupon the latter retorted that Siegfried was no vassal, and furthermore that

he, and not Gunther, had been her first husband, showing as proof the ring he had taken from her. So Brunhild, finding she had been deceived, demanded vengeance on Siegfried, and Hagen swore to gain it for her. Having learned from Kriemhild the one vulnerable spot on Siegfried's body, Hagen killed him with a spear as they were stooping to drink from a spring on a hunting party. The rest is a long and bloody story of Kriemhild's revenge and her attempts to get the Nibelung gold from Hagen, who had locked it up in the treasure chamber and kept the keys.

There are other relations of the Siegfried stories in various forms and fragments, as in the Icelandic Eddas, certain other Sagas, and the German "Heldenbuch" or "Book of Heroes." It was from the Volsunga Saga, however, and from some stories in the Eddas that Wagner derived the most of his material. He also employed many of the features and characters of the Norse mythology that are not specifically included in the stories, though they are furnished by the Eddas as a whole. He exercised even here, the right of the poet, and gave the gods, dwarfs, and giants, certain qualities and relations to various incidents in the legends that they do not have in the ancient myths. The gods in this cosmogony are not omnipotent nor omniscient, but submitted to the power of fate, dominant over all the world. Inevitable destruction loomed before them, which they could postpone but could not finally avert. In the Scandinavian myths the gods were in no wise connected with the Nibelung hoard. Not

from it came their inevitable day of reckoning, but from other forces; and it is one of Wagner's master strokes that made their downfall a result of their trafficking with the ill-fated treasure — a stroke that at once put a new moral force into the story.

Wotan rules by conquest and by treaties, the records of which are carved upon the haft of his spear, cut from the trunk of the World Ash. One of his eyes he has lost, paying it as a toll for a draught from the spring of knowledge beneath that tree. He has begotten of an earthly mother, all-wise Erda, a sisterhood of wish-maidens, Valkyries, who summon to Valhalla the spirits of heroes slain in battle. There they dwell in feasting, waiting to aid him in the final conflict with the enemies of the gods. His spouse is Fricka, upholder of the marriage law, a very Juno in principles and temper. Freia is the goddess of love and of endless youth, the golden apples from whose garden give immortality to the gods. Loge is the spirit of evil and of trickery, of wonderful cunning and restless activity, whose outward form was fire and the flickering of flame. The Norns are daughters of Erda, who spin the strands of fate.

Upon the earth's surface dwelt the giants, traditional enemies of the gods, strong but dull-witted, whom Wotan has hired to build Valhalla. In the earth's dark recesses dwell the dwarfs, smiths, and makers of weapons. Wotan shares the propensities of Olympian Jove to wander upon the earth; and it is in one of these wanderings

that as Wälse he begot the twin brother and sister, who in turn begot the Volsung hero, Siegfried.

PART II

WAGNER'S MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC SYSTEM

According to Wagner's theories, the musical drama is the fitting expression of larger ethical ideas, and of the national spirit in art; he finds in the Teutonic myths and immemorial legends the most appropriate material for the embodiment of these ideals and this spirit; and in the legendary personages peopling these legends he discovers figures typical of humanity and human characters and types, passions, impulses, and aspirations, to represent in the broadest and most general way the eternal verities. Such a musical drama should be based on a complete reversal of the conception of opera hitherto prevailing. It should involve a perfect coöperation between all the factors that enter into stage representation, and a mutual surrender of some of the exclusive rights of each, to the attainment of a complete and harmonious blending into one larger whole. In the older conception of opera, the drama, such as it was, existed chiefly for the sake of the music. Action on the stage was an excuse for music, a peg upon which it could be hung at the pleasure of composers and for the benefit of the singers of airs, duets, ensemble pieces, and choruses. According to Wagner, the error in this form of opera lay in the fact that one of the means of expression, the music, was made the object; and that the object

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of the expression, the drama, was made the means. He demanded that the dramatic idea should be made the chief thing, and that music should be but one of the means of expressing and enforcing it. This and the others, — poetic diction, action, gesture, declamation, scenic art, and all the accessories that go to make up the stage picture, — should be welded together into one homogeneous whole.

Herein was involved a different conception of the function of music from that which composers had hitherto held for dramatic purposes. This had been based on the forms and patterns that had been developed in instrumental music and in songs — definitely recurring phrases and periods, cadences, and closes, regular and balanced in structure, as in a complete tune or air. Operas of the older sort are composed of such airs, of duets, and other concerted pieces, and of choruses, all formed on the same model with a more or less subordinated instrumental accompaniment. These are connected by declamatory passages called recitatives, with usually the baldest kind of harmonic support from the instruments. Wagner devised a wholly different musical system. The characters of the drama declaim their lines in a sort of semi-melodious speech, heightened and intensified in its significance by its musical quality, the so-called "endless melody," whose contour is constantly dependent upon the words and the emotions and the mood to be expressed. The poem is written not in rhymed or metrical verse, but in a kind of free, measured, rhythm. It is, however,

alliterative verse, fashioned after old Teutonic and Scandinavian models, its chief characteristic being the recurrence of initial sounds in certain words of each line, and a sort of irregular but powerfully leaping rhythm.

Beneath and around the vocal declamation flows an increasing stream of the many-voiced orchestra, to which is entrusted the chief burden of the musical expression. It follows the development of the dramatic action and interprets all that goes on upon the stage with a marvelous potency and unending variety of resource. It is here, in fact, that Wagner's originality achieved some of its greatest results.

This orchestral part is largely built up out of a great number of characteristic themes, representative or "leading" motives as they have been called, the use of which is one of the most striking features of his music. It is one which is really his own, however dimly it may have been suggested or foreshadowed by some of his predecessors. None of them ever had the faintest conception of the symphonic employment of such themes as almost the sole musical material of a whole opera, or of developing from them the living, palpitating organism that Wagner developed. These themes are short musical passages or phrases, whose chief significance may be in their melodic outline, or quite as much in their harmonic substance and sequences; pregnant, picturesque, suggestive in both aspects; always striking and individual, not always beautiful, but always intensely characteristic and expressive, and

of a haunting power, so that, once impressed on the listener's mind, they are ineradicable. They are what musicians call "plastic" — they lend themselves remarkably to all the combinations, developments, changes, and elaborations by means of which the composer spins his wonderful orchestral web of infinite and ever-changing pattern, retaining homogeneity and logical cogency through all the play of imagination to which they are subjected.

Each of these themes is associated with some specific meaning and charged with a certain emotional color. Some are significant of personages in the drama; sometimes there are several to suggest different aspects of the same personages, as of Siegfried and Brünnhilde and Wotan; or their different relations and activities; some relate to natural powers and elements, as fire and water; some to the agencies and the interacting play of ethical forces; some to the passions, the loves and hates, the wickedness and the beneficent influence of men and women, gods and dwarfs; some to things, as the ring and the sword and the tarnhelm. But there is nothing mechanical in their use by Wagner; they do not automatically appear and disappear in the score, merely with the appearance and disappearance of men and things upon the stage. There is always some suggestive reference, some implication of their inner relation with the scheme of things. Many of them, as will be seen, are closely interrelated, not only in meaning, but also, as a logical consequence, in form. Some are developed, one from another,

by enlargement or diminution, or by harmonic change, enrichment or simplification; or by rhythmical transformation; and frequently two or more are joined together with a specialized meaning. But in all circumstances and at all points they are made subservient to the dramatic expression. Here Wagner's inventiveness and inexhaustible fecundity of melodic ideas reach their highest power. The student must constantly marvel at the never-failing appositeness of the musical embodiment of the dramatic situation, the power of the music to denote character, motives, the passions, sentiments, feelings, and impulses of the personages upon the stage; to set before us majesty and meanness, dignity, terror, anger; to create an atmosphere, to transport the imagination to glimmering depths of water, stormy mountain peaks, sun-flecked forest glades, the gloom of night, the mellowing radiance of afternoon. In all its bearings the situation is illustrated by music heightening and completing, through the ear, the effects presented to the eye. The mood is fixed, the senses of the listener, and through them his whole intellectual and emotional state, are enchained and held captive to the idea that the dramatist is setting forth. As Mr. Ernest Newman says:[1]

> Wagner saw human life and character, the outward world, the interplay of force with force, of element with element, all in terms of music. Those who are acquainted with his scores stand astonished at the rare felicity of some of his conceptions, his power to sketch character in a

[1] "A Study of Wagner," p. 237.

musical phrase, to write descriptive music — such as the forest scene in "Siegfried" or the fire music in "The Valkyrie" — that can only be described as marvellous in its pictorial quality.

Of the greatest importance in Wagner's scores are the new harmonic combinations, the new emotional and poetic power he gained through them; and the subtle, rich, and highly developed orchestral coloring that he employs. Both of these are developments of the art that he carried far beyond the point that any of his predecessors had reached, however much he may have benefited as to orchestration from the work of Berlioz and Liszt. Into neither is it possible to enter more fully here; but quoting again from Mr. Newman, we may see, with him, "the unerring color sense that gives the 'inevitable' quality to his orchestration — gives us the feeling that ear and eye are interchanging their functions, that the music of the orchestra is only another aspect of the person or the scene upon the stage."

This musical fabric is entirely intelligible in and of itself, as a part of the drama. It was Wagner's intention that it should be so, and that his audiences should not need a special knowledge of music to gain the right impression from his musical dramas. But the enjoyment and understanding of any highly organized form of music are enhanced by a knowledge of its structure. The motives that Wagner devised for "The Ring of the Nibelung" will speak for themselves; but to those who will pursue the subject further to gain a more minute insight into Wagner's methods

and purposes, the following chapter is addressed. But before entering upon it, we cannot do better than to consider the warning words of Mr. Henderson:[1]

> If the guiding motives fail to create the proper emotional investiture . . . then they are valueless, even at Wagner's own rating, for he says that we must feel before we can understand a drama. And we ourselves can readily see how useless it is to tell us of the specified meanings of sweet musical phrases if they do not, when heard, help to warm into a vitalizing glow the significance of the text and action. If they fail to do this, the organic union so ardently sought by Wagner does not exist. If they succeed, it matters not at all whether we know their names.

To which may be added these further words:[2]

> Learn the text. By the text the music must be measured. By the text the music must be understood. By the music the text is illuminated and made vital. But every measure of Wagner's music is explained by the poetry.

Space will not serve to point out all the divergences that Wagner has made in his dramas from the legends as they are outlined. They are almost always in the direction of securing greater dramatic effectiveness and directness, or of enhancing the poetical suggestiveness. To begin with, the gold in the legends does not come from the Rhine; the Rhine is only its ultimate disposition, though in the Volsunga Saga it comes from Andvari, a dweller in the waters. Wagner has made the Nibelungs the dwarfs; in the legends they are the possessors of the treasure, the name seeming to

[1] "Richard Wagner," p. 191. [2] P. 219.

be transferred with the thing. He has made the giants the builders of Valhalla, though in the Norse mythology the gods built it themselves. Thereby a valuable motive is at once introduced into the drama. A highly original and poetic idea is that which makes the renunciation of love the first requisite for him who would fashion the ring from the stolen gold and win dominion by its power. The method of paying the gold to the giants by piling it up so as to hide Freia is Wagner's more beautiful version of the filling and covering of the otter skin — and how much more beautiful is the filling in of the ring to hide the gleam of Freia's eye, than to hide the hair of the otter's muzzle! The prophecy of Erda in "The Rhine Gold" bears directly upon Wotan's sin, though it has no such bearing in the Eddaic legend; and this is but an instance of how the poet has gathered all the strands of the legend to serve the higher purpose he had in view.

"The Valkyrie" is largely Wagner's own poetic conception; he has taken some of the personages of the legends, but they stand in widely different relationships. Volsung is Wotan himself, not his descendant. Siegmund and Sieglinde are his own twin children; but the motive is changed from the vengeance, that rules in the Saga, to a process of fate. There is nothing in the legends to resemble Brünnhilde in much more than name. She is there Wotan's daughter; but Wagner gave her her momentous connection with Siegfried's parents, and endowed her with her glorious personality as goddess and mortal woman. Her scene with

Waltraute, pregnant with significance in the drama, is Wagner's; and the episode in which Siegfried is plied with Gutrune's magic draught in "The Dusk of the Gods," and of his return to Brünnhilde in Gunther's shape to gain her for his bride, is raised to a tragic power and intensity that have no parallel in the Saga or the German epic. The scenes and surroundings of "Siegfried" are only in a general way suggested in the legends. Wagner has conceived them in a picturesque and poetic vein all his own, and has threaded them upon the motive of irrevocable destiny so that they proceed swiftly and logically to the dénouement. Here he has abandoned the Volsunga Saga, and has been guided by the Thidrek Saga, for the sake of the dramatic advantage it afforded him. In "The Dusk of the Gods" he has changed and compressed much from the Saga and the Nibelungenlied. The woman who appears in them as Gudrun and Kriemhild, and who is there far more important than Brünnhilde, is reduced to a pale and insignificant personage, a mere accessory of the plot. Gunther, too, is much reduced in dignity; and Hagen plays a different and more sinister rôle in the drama than in the legend, where he acts solely out of loyalty to his sovereign's wife and his sovereign's honor, and has no relation with Alberich. But greater than the sum of these and all the other details of legend, is the majestic sweep with which it carries out the ethical idea, and the seizing power with which it has all been transmuted into drama through music.

THE DRAMA AND ITS MEANING

In "The Ring of the Nibelung" is set forth the irresistible working of Fate to avenge the violation of the moral law; and, again, the victorious process of atonement and of redemption through love, whereby a new order is established. Wotan's lust for power, his endeavor to ward off the inevitable end, starts him upon a course of wrong that brings a trail of evil consequences. Self-preservation is the motive of his sin. The castle of Valhalla was for a bulwark to the gods against their enemies; for its building he had promised a price which he dared not pay — the goddess of youth whose loss would mean decay and death to the gods. In possessing himself of the gold stolen by Alberich he had again entered upon devious paths that should lead to his downfall. In wresting the gold from its rightful place in the Rhine's bed, Alberich let loose upon the world the curse that he himself pronounced upon it when it was wrested from him in turn. The possessor of the ring made of it would become the ruler of the world; but he would come equally under its fatal curse, he and all to whom the ring thereafter should pass. The curse, as Wagner said, could be annulled "only by the restoration of the gold robbed from nature and misused."

Wotan is, in truth, if not the hero, at all events, the central figure of the Trilogy. Its story is the story of his efforts on behalf of himself and Valhalla, of his vain undertaking against Fate, and of its punishment. Alberich, possessing the gold,

and having forsworn love, could rule the world and work destruction to Valhalla. To gain the gold, then, was the first thought of the god, maliciously persuaded thereto by Loge, but with the gold went its curse, to which his slow intelligence was not awake. In "The Rhine Gold" we see him jauntily attempting to put off the giants without their rightful due, counselling with the crafty Loge to gain Alberich's tainted gold, and recalled to the sense of impending retribution only by Erda's warning. We see him at the very end entering upon possession of his castle with misgiving, and with the first foreshadowing of a hero and his sword who shall fight for him. In "The Valkyrie" we see him with his plan worked out to protect himself and his companions by rearing a hero, a free agent, who shall perform the expiation that he cannot perform — the restoration of the ring to its rightful owners. He has bartered the ring to the giants and cannot regain it; and Fafner, too stupid to use its power, lies sleeping and guarding it. The hero, of his own free will, thinks the god, shall gain the ring and fulfil the demands of law and remove at once the curse and the danger to the gods. He sacrifices his hero Siegmund at the demand of Fricka, and takes from his sword the irresistible power he promised in time of need; and though he thus saves himself one additional burden of guilt, he assumes another. He sees his plan wrecked and demolished and we watch in "The Valkyrie" the hopes and desires of this god ground between the upper and the nether millstone, his spirit anguished by their

demolition, standing at bay. "After his parting from Brünnhilde, Wotan truly is nothing but a departed spirit," wrote Wagner; "his highest aim can only be to let things take their course, go their own gait, no longer definitely to interfere." In "Siegfried" he has given up his vain hope of perpetuating his power. He spends his days roaming over the earth as the Wanderer, waiting for the hero's coming that he knows he cannot resist, though it bring an end of the old order. "To look I came, not to do," he says to Alberich when he encounters him at Fafner's cave. And he tries in vain to bar the way to Siegfried, eager for Brünnhilde and the flaming circle about her. The sword that in Siegmund's hands was broken against his spear shaft, now shatters it as Siegfried swings it. "Fare on! I cannot restrain thee!" says the god, as he disappears forever from the scene.

The full meaning of the curse is not learned by Wotan till he has reached the end of his tragic course. Wagner writes: "Only when the ring must ruin even Siegfried does he realize that this restoration of the stolen gold to the Rhine can wipe away the ill." In "The Valkyrie" he is an imposing figure, grimly opposing the forces against him, turning against the relentless pursuit of Fate. In "Siegfried" he is a pathetic one, rising to the tragic height of willing his own undoing. The tragedy of his position he himself poignantly expresses in "The Valkyrie," as he finds himself thwarted at every turn by the curse, in his desire to serve alike gods and the new race he is creating.

"From the curse I fled, but even now the curse is with me. What I loved I must forsake, destroy what is dear to me, betray him who trusts me."

The gods, helpless under the burden of their own transgression, are relieved from that burden by the free man, for whose appearance Wotan had made preparation. And by the same token they are doomed to their end. Siegmund, the hero whom he had begotten, who had himself won the sword as the sign of his fitness, was no free agent, but a puppet, moved by Wotan's will. The god's plan is shattered upon a new offence against the moral law — adultery joined to incest — for which both Siegmund and Sieglinde go down to destruction.

But the race of the Volsungs is continued in Siegfried, with whose advent the workings of fate enter a new phase. He is the free agent, the unfettered youth, the natural man rejoicing in his own strength — "the fair young form of Man in all the freshness of his force," as Wagner described him; "the real, naked man, in whom I might spy each throbbing of his pulses, each stir within his mighty muscles, in uncramped, freest motion; the type of the free human being." As such he stands for untrammelled impulse and action, as Wotan stands for the restraint of law and a foresight of the outcome. In "The Dusk of the Gods" he has learned wisdom, but he must go unflinchingly forward to offer the expiation for the curse. He is at all times the type of the hero, the doer of deeds, the resolute and daring.

Brünnhilde is without doubt the most splendid

of all Wagner's creations among his many great and winsome womanly characters. She is truly his creation, for she has beyond her name, no recognizable prototype in the Sagas. In her character of Wotan's wish maiden she has devotion, tenderness, a heart of flaming fire; she is a woman, through all the aerial splendor of her divinity. There is a superb joy of freedom in her first appearance on the mountain peak with her Valkyrie cry; as she appears to Siegmund to announce his doom, she comes as the proud representative of the will of Wotan. Now the majesty of her godlike attributes is foremost. Soon it is turned to burning sympathy finding outlet in impetuous action — a sympathy born of her deep love of her father, and of her impulse to carry out what she knows is his real will, the preservation of the hapless fugitive lovers, rather than of the purpose imposed upon him by Fricka. Through that comes her disobedience and its punishment, which is the penalty of her love. Wakening, in "Siegfried," emerging into her new state of mortal womanhood, she is at first fearful, dreading the growing passion of the ardent youth who has roused her; the fierce pride of the goddess now and again takes possession of her. But mortal woman she is, and as a mortal woman she gives herself to Siegfried, as the power of love enfolds her, too, the "mad, furious maid," in a splendid self-surrender. Let the Norns rend their strands of fate, let the gods succumb in darkness; they two have found each other, and they, laughing, will go down to death. In "The Dusk of the

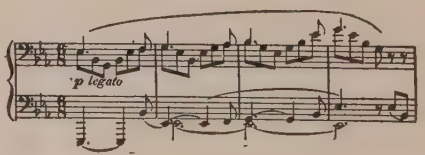
Gods" she is very humanly a woman, and she goes through the heart-breaking sorrows of that experience with certain womanly weaknesses as well as womanly strength. But in the last scene, when all is revealed to her, and all things she knows, she rises to the supreme height of the grandeur of self-sacrifice. She tranquilly imputes their everlasting disgrace to the gods, who condemned Siegfried to the doom that should expiate their sins. He, truest of all, should betray her, that "wise a woman might grow." Her eloquence is the eloquence of a prophetess proclaiming a new day; and with solemn joy she joins her Siegfried on the funeral pyre to fulfill the last necessity that shall bring that day. Her sacrifice accomplishes the final retribution and atonement, and her last act accomplishes the affirmation of her last words, that love is the one eternal and enduring good.

PART III

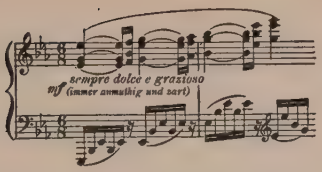
THE MUSIC AND THE STORY

I. THE RHINE GOLD

The prelude to "The Rhine Gold" is purely descriptive music, and is without significance apart from the scene to which it introduces us. In heightening the effect of that scene, however, and in preparing the listener's mood, it is wonderfully effective. The scene is the lowest depths of the Rhine; a greenish light penetrates but dimly from above. There is the motion of the waters; but before it is seen, at the parting of the curtain, it is felt and heard in the music. There is a long, sustained E flat, upon which is superposed a B flat; then begins an upward arpeggio figure of the tones of the tonic chord of E flat, in $\frac{6}{8}$ rhythm, gradually increasing in complexity. It soon takes the following form, the motive of the Primeval Element, water:

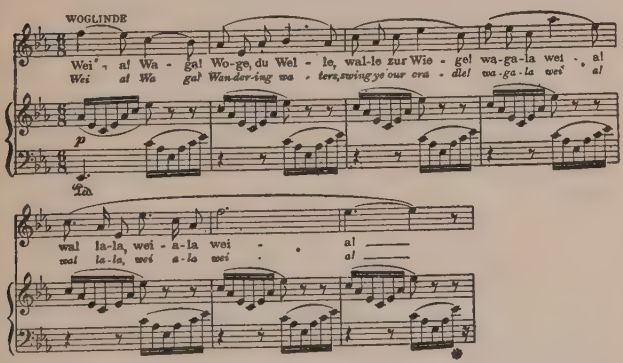
Ia. THE PRIMEVAL ELEMENT

The waving arpeggiate figure breaks into a more rapid movement represented by sixteenth notes, and the harmony becomes fuller, the volume of tone greater.

Ib.



As the curtain parts, we see the three Rhine Maidens joyously swimming, and as they swim, singing: the motive of the Rhine Maidens (p. 5, syst. 3):[1]

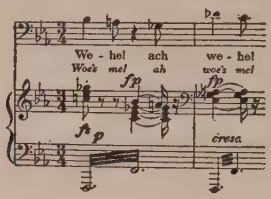
II. THE RHINE MAIDENS


WOGLINDE
Wei' a! Wa - ga! Wo-ge, du Wel - le, wal-le zur Wie - ge! wa-ga-la wei - a!
Wei a! Wa ga! Wan-der-ing wa - ters, swing ye our cra - dle! wa-ga-la wei' a!
p
La
wal la-la, wei - a-la wei - a!
wal la-la, wei a-la wei a!

It is carried on with graceful melodic developments, till Alberich, the dwarf, climbs out of a dark chasm, watches them, and finally calls to them. The clear fluency of the music is at once disturbed; minor harmonies, short, crabbed phrases; sharp, sudden discords; trouble its flow, as he calls to them and tries to catch them (pp. 8–19).

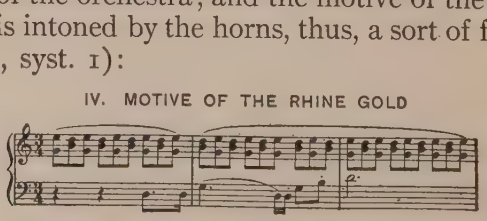
[1] The references are to page and system in the new edition of the Piano Scores, by Karl Klindworth, published in this country by G. Schirmer.

Flosshilde sings him a mocking love song, (p. 19), and finally yields herself to his embrace, till suddenly she breaks from it and joins her sisters with scornful laughter (p. 24). Alberich, lamenting, breaks out in a bitter rage and the motive of the Menial is heard (p. 24, syst. 1):

III. THE MOTIVE OF THE MENIAL

The music depicts his wild chase of the three fair swimmers, his stumbling and falling over the rocks. As he finally pauses breathless, and shakes his fist at them, a chord succession is heard fortissimo, in the insistent rhythm that a little later will be completely identified with the race of the Nibelungs to which he belongs (p. 30, syst. 3):

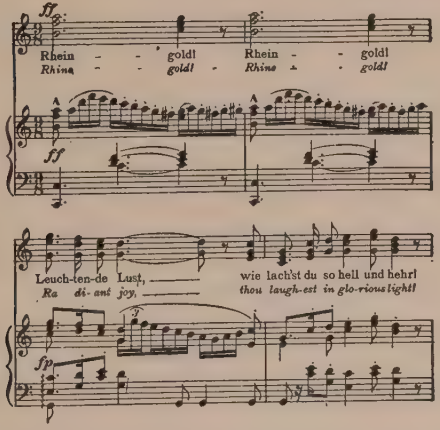
The Rhine Gold in the rock suddenly begins to glow with an increasing brightness, sending out a magical golden light through the water. As they see it, the maidens circle around the rock, hymning a gracious melody to the rippling accompaniment of the orchestra; and the motive of the Rhine Gold is intoned by the horns, thus, a sort of fanfare (p. 31, syst. 1):

IV. MOTIVE OF THE RHINE GOLD

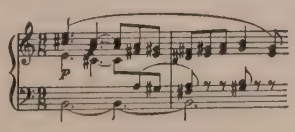


The Rhine Daughters break into joyous song in praise of the Rhine Gold (p. 33, syst. 2):

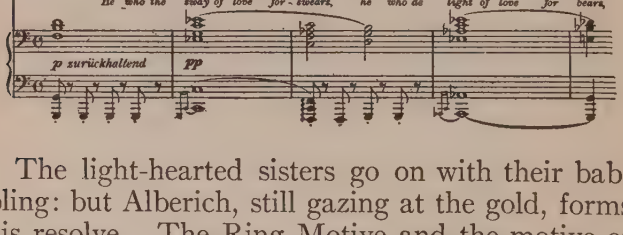
V. PRAISE OF THE RHINE GOLD


ff
Rhein - - gold! Rhein - - gold!
Rhine - - gold! Rhine - - gold!
ff
Leuch-ten-de Lust, wie lach'st du so hell und hehr!
Ra di-ant joy, thou laugh-est in glo-rious light!
fp

but Alberich has no more eyes for them. His gaze is fixed on the gleaming gold. He asks them what it is; they deride his ignorance and Wellgunde tells him of its wonders. The world's wealth would be won by him who would fashion a ring of it. The orchestra for the first time proclaims the Ring Motive (p. 41, syst. 3), that plays a part of great importance through all the rest of the score, under manifold transformations and developments;

VI. THE RING MOTIVE

But this power would belong only to him who would renounce love; and Woglinde goes on to disclose this fateful proviso, in the motive of Renunciation (p. 43, syst. 1) gloomy and ominous:

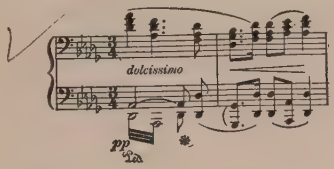
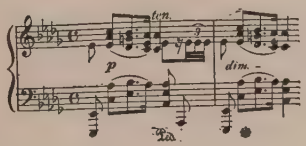
VII. MOTIVE OF RENUNCIATION

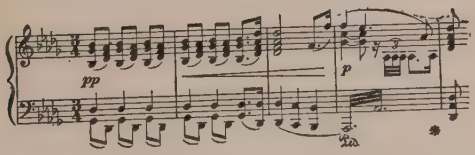

Nur wer der Min-ne Macht ent-sagt, nur wer der Lie-be Lust ver-jagt,
He who the sway of love for-swears, he who de light of love for bears,
p zurückhaltend
pp

The light-hearted sisters go on with their babbling: but Alberich, still gazing at the gold, forms his resolve. The Ring Motive and the motive of Renunciation are heard in succession (p. 47, syst. 3, — p. 48, syst. 1). He clambers up the rock from which the gold is gleaming, and at last seizes it, wrenches it from its place and makes way with it.

Sudden darkness falls; the maidens' merriment turns to lamentation. Alberich's mocking laughter is heard from the depths, and in the darkness the scene changes, as the orchestra plays a passage composed of motives previously employed. The music becomes subdued and more measured as the motive of Renunciation (p. 53, syst. 4), and the Ring (syst. 6) are heard. These are interrupted by a harp passage delicately suggesting the motive of Freia (xvii) that will later appear in more characteristic form. The stage gradually brightens, and the castle of Valhalla is disclosed, standing upon a cliff overlooking the

Rhine. Wotan and Fricka lie asleep in the foreground. Day is dawning. The motive of Valhalla is softly intoned by the brass instruments (p. 55, syst. 1):

VIII. MOTIVE OF VALHALLA

Its closing cadences come later (p. 55, syst. 4):

then (p. 57, syst. 4).

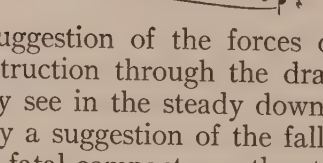


The motive is one of the most grandiose and imposing of all, and wonderfully expressive of the power and dignity of the gods. It is generally played by the brass choir of the orchestra, which Wagner reinforced by the so-called "Bayreuth tubas," an instrument devised by him for his "Nibelung" instrumentation. The relationship of this motive with that of the Ring (vi) will appear

on examination; but its form is more massive, its harmonies simplified and its intervals made diatonic instead of chromatic. This inter-relation of themes of allied significance will be met with through the whole Trilogy. It is one of the most subtle and potent devices employed by Wagner to enhance their suggestiveness, and to secure coherency and unity in his system.

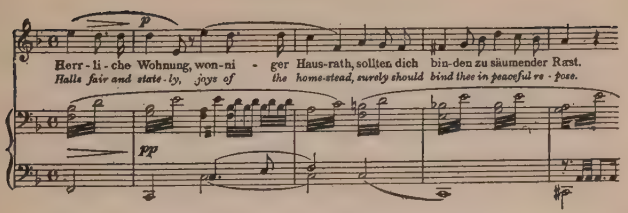
The god and the goddess rejoice in the sight of the "eternal work," but the troubling thoughts of the price to be paid comes speedily. With it we hear in the orchestra the motive of the Compact, by which that price, the person of Freia, goddess of Love and Youth, was agreed upon with the giants (p. 58, syst. 3):

IX. MOTIVE OF THE COMPACT



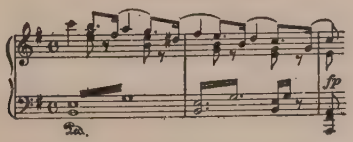
Another suggestion of the forces of Fate that work for destruction through the drama. Those who like may see in the steady downward course of the melody a suggestion of the fall of the gods of which this fatal compact was the starting point. Fricka upraids her spouse for his recklessness in entering into it — what had led her to consent was the hope of keeping him with her in these stately halls and thereby curtailing his wanderings; and this she expresses in a motive characteristic of the enchaining power of woman's love in marriage (p. 61, syst. 1):

X. THE ENCHAINMENT OF LOVE


p
Herr-li-che Wohnung, won-ni - ger Haus-rath, sollten dich bin-den zu säumender Rast.
Halls fair and state-ly, joys of the home-stead, surely should bind thee in peaceful re-pose.
pp

Disjected chords in the orchestra foreshadow the approach of Freia, fleeing from the giants who are trying to seize her as their promised reward. The Flight Motive is sounded in the orchestra, combined with the first clause of the motive representative of herself, later appearing in its full and complete form (p. 64, syst. 1).

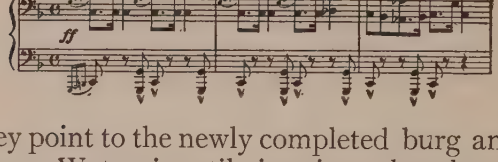
XI. FLIGHT MOTIVE



Fasolt was the giant who had threatened her; and at the mention of his name a suggestion of the Giants' Motive comes from the orchestra (p. 64, syst. 3), but not its complete form — only one giant is mentioned! Wotan bids her not to fear — did she see Loge? for upon Loge he relies to free him from his predicament; and his name, too, calls forth a suggestion of his flickering theme (p. 64, syst. 4), but not yet in well recognizable shape.

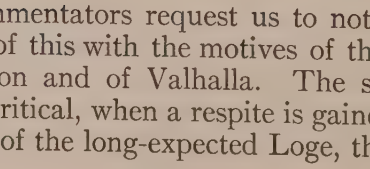
Come the giants, stamping in clumsily and quite unmistakably, as follows: (p. 68, syst. 1).

XII. THE GIANTS



They point to the newly completed burg and ask their pay; Wotan jauntily inquires what they want. The Compact Motive is sounded (p. 69, syst. 3), as they say that of course it is the fair Freia, as agreed; and her motive, not even yet in its definite form, is heard: (p. 69, syst. 3). The giants are speechless with rage at this treachery. The motive of the Compact accompanies their references to the broken agreement (p. 70, syst. 2 and 4, etc.), as do fragments of the Freia Motive (p. 72, syst. 4, p. 73, syst. 4). Fafner, in replying to Wotan's scornful query as to what such dullards want of her, recalls the Golden Apples that ripen in her garden; and their motive is a musical expression of the everlasting youth and joy they bring (p. 74, syst. 2):

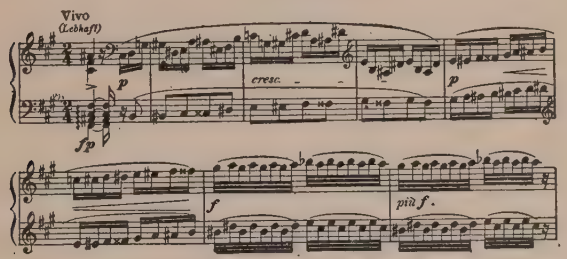
XIII. THE GOLDEN APPLES



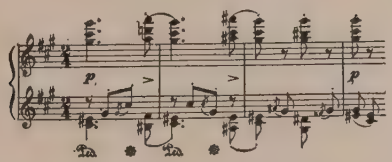
The commentators request us to notice the relationship of this with the motives of the Ring, of Renunciation and of Valhalla. The situation is becoming critical, when a respite is gained through the arrival of the long-expected Loge, the fire god,

the intriguer, the shifty and adroit. The motive that accompanies him and his doings has been described as the most characteristic one in the whole Trilogy — a sparkling, scintillating passage in chromatics, ending with trills in sixths (p. 77, syst. 4):

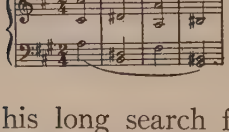
XIV. LOGE'S MOTIVE



Its descriptive quality is unmistakable. Closely associated with it is the motive of his Magic Fire (p. 78, syst. 4):

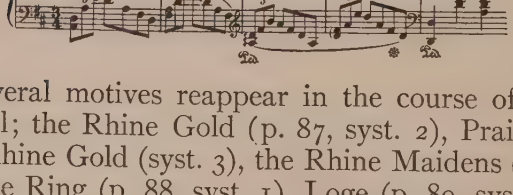
XV. THE MAGIC FIRE

He has much to say of his efforts to think of some way to help Wotan, which rouses the anger of the gods Froh and Donner; but Wotan calms them with assurances of the worth of Loge's counsel. We hear the motive of Reflection (p. 84, sys. 2) that later, in "Siegfried," is to be the audible symbol of much thought:

XVI. MOTIVE OF REFLECTION



Loge recites his long search for a ransom for Freia — something that man will take as a substitute for woman's love, "her worth and delights." Now for the first time we hear Freia's Motive, the motive of eternal youth, at its full value (p. 85, syst. 4):

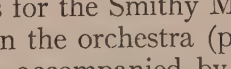
XVII. FREIA'S MOTIVE



Several motives reappear in the course of this recital; the Rhine Gold (p. 87, syst. 2), Praise of the Rhine Gold (syst. 3), the Rhine Maidens (syst. 4), the Ring (p. 88, syst. 1), Loge (p. 89, syst. 3), Renunciation (upon which he seems to harp with special pleasure, p. 85, syst. 4, p. 86, syst. 3, p. 87, syst. 2, etc.). He rouses everybody's cupidity, the Giants, Wotan's, Fricka's; and in explaining the work of the dwarfs in thrall to Alberich, he brings up the Smithy Motive, but in a reversed rhythm (p. 92, syst. 3), later to appear in its proper form. Wotan having spurned the giants' offer to take the gold instead of Freia, they make off with her. A gloom comes upon the scene and the gods begin to look old and wan, as the goddess of youth is

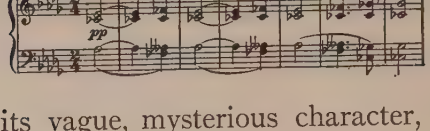
torn from them, and her motive is heard in chromatic distortion (p. 103, syst. 1, etc.). With Loge, Wotan starts off for Nibelheim to gain the gold which the giants may be induced to accept as a substitute for Freia. The scene changes behind a black cloud, and we hear in the orchestra Loge's flickering motive (p. 110, syst. 2), the motive of Renunciation (p. 111, syst. 3), which suggests the fateful outcome of Wotan's plan; the motive of the Menial (p. 111, syst. 5), leading into the Flight Motive in dotted triple rhythm (syst. 6) and into the Ring Motive, also in triple rhythm (p. 112, syst. 4) — a rhythmic elaboration that has prepared us for the Smithy Motive which now resounds, first in the orchestra (p. 112, syst. 5), in its proper form accompanied by the Rhine Gold fanfare, then hammered furiously upon unseen anvils behind the scene (p. 113, syst. 1):

XVIII. SMITHY MOTIVE



With it the Flight Motive is combined, in the bass (p. 113, syst. 1). The hammering on the anvils gradually dies away; the motive of the Menial becomes prominent (p. 114, syst. 1); the whole merges into the Ring Motive (syst. 4) and the third scene, in Nibelheim, is shown with Alberich belaboring the unfortunate Mime, above the insistent repetition of the Menial's Motive. As Alberich seizes the miraculous Tarnhelm, bestowing invisibility, we hear the Tarnhelm Motive (p. 117, syst. 2):

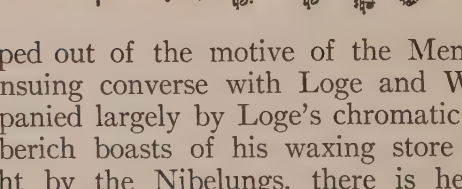
XIX. THE TARNHELM MOTIVE



Note its vague, mysterious character, with its ending on the open fifth.

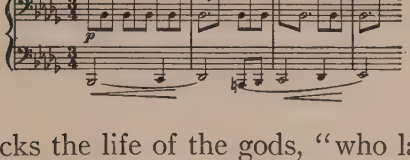
We hear Loge's flickering chromatics (p. 122, syst. 1), and know that the adventurers from the upper world are approaching. They find Mime moaning from his brother's blows, and ask him what his trouble is; and his reflections on the subject are accompanied by the motive thereto appropriate (xvi; p. 123, syst. 2). Alberich enters, full of his triumph, and now certain of his mastery over the race of dwarfs, expressed through the motive of Alberich's Cry of Triumph (p. 133, syst. 3).

XX. ALBERICH'S CRY OF TRIUMPH



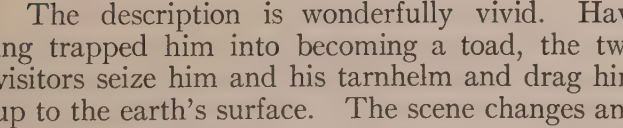
developed out of the motive of the Menial (iii). The ensuing converse with Loge and Wotan is accompanied largely by Loge's chromatic motive. As Alberich boasts of his waxing store of gold wrought by the Nibelungs, there is heard the motive of the Rising Hoard (p. 139, syst. 1), a little further on appearing in a somewhat more developed form (p. 143, syst. 1):

XXI. MOTIVE OF THE RISING HOARD



He mocks the life of the gods, "who laugh and love, lapped in gently wafting breezes," and Freia's Motive is heard (p. 140, syst. 1), and those of Renunciation (syst. 4), Valhalla (p. 142, syst. 1), the Rising Hoard (p. 143, syst. 1), and the motive of the Rhine Gold (syst. 4). Tempted by Loge to show his power, he puts on the Tarnhelm (the motive comes forth) (p. 150, syst. 1), and turns himself into a dragon. Then is heard the Dragon Motive (p. 150, syst. 3).

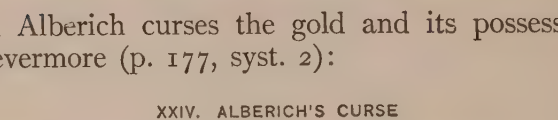
XXII. DRAGON MOTIVE



The description is wonderfully vivid. Having trapped him into becoming a toad, the two visitors seize him and his tarnhelm and drag him up to the earth's surface. The scene changes and the orchestral interlude brings up the Valhalla Motive and Loge's flicker (p. 154, syst. 4), the Ring (p. 155, syst. 2), Renunciation (syst. 3) the Smithy (syst. 5), Flight (p. 156, syst. 2), the Giants and Valhalla (syst. 4), and so on. The mountain heights of the second scene are disclosed as Alberich is dragged forth, abusing his captors. They demand his hoard as a ransom,

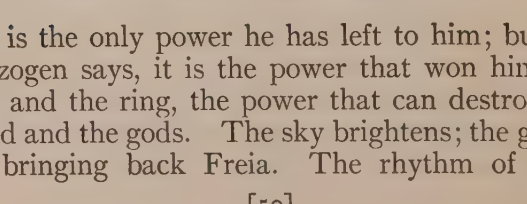
and as he summons the Nibelungs to bring it, the motive of the Rising Hoard is sounded (p. 164, syst. 4). Even the ring is forced from him, to his complete despair — for with that left him, he could regain all the rest. The motive of Compact (p. 173, syst. 2) is heard, and as the ring is seized, the Rhine Gold Motive is launched with a blast (p. 173, syst. 4), and then that of Renunciation (syst. 4). Alberich is set free. He turns to his captors in deadly rage and bitterness, and the motive of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction (p. 174, syst. 4), is heard, its chief characteristic being its syncopated beat:

XXIII. THE NIBELUNG'S WORK OF DESTRUCTION



and Alberich curses the gold and its possessors forevermore (p. 177, syst. 2):

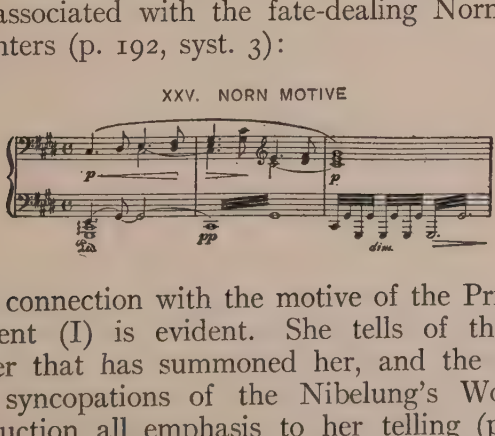
XXIV. ALBERICH'S CURSE



It is the only power he has left to him; but, as Wolzogen says, it is the power that won him the gold and the ring, the power that can destroy the world and the gods. The sky brightens; the giants are bringing back Freia. The rhythm of their

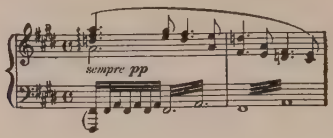
motive is heard in the bass (p. 178, syst. 5), and the Freia Motive above it (p. 179, syst. 3). The exchange of Freia for the gold is about to be made, and the Compact Motive sounds (p. 182, syst. 2), but Fasolt demands that the treasure be piled so high (motive of the Rising Hoard, p. 182, syst. 4), that it shall hide the fair maid from his sight — and the motive of Renunciation comes (p. 183, syst. 2), with the Freia Motive and the Smithy Motive, welded together with a wonderful art. To stop the final crevices the Tarnhelm (p. 188, syst. 1), and the Ring must be added (Praise of the Rhinegold, p. 190, syst. 1; Rhine Gold fanfare syst. 3; Ring, p. 191, syst. 1), much against Wotan's will. He is persuaded to it by the warning of Erda, the wise, all-knowing mother, who emerges from the bowels of the earth, her dwelling-place, and whose emergence is accompanied by a motive associated with the fate-dealing Norns, her daughters (p. 192, syst. 3):

XXV. NORN MOTIVE

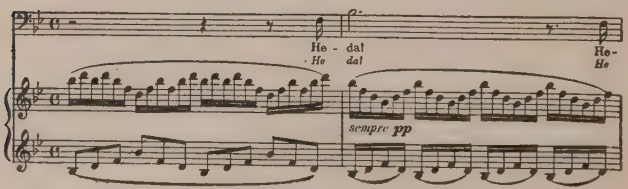
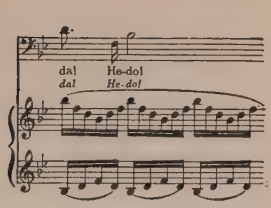


Its connection with the motive of the Primeval Element (I) is evident. She tells of the dire danger that has summoned her, and the malignant syncopations of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction all emphasis to her telling (p. 193, syst. 5). A darksome day dawns for the gods, is

her warning; and it is accompanied by the motive of the Dusk of the Gods (p. 194, syst. 2):

XXVI. THE DUSK OF THE GODS

"Give up the Ring!" she counsels (Ring, p. 194, syst. 2), and Wotan yields, with the Compact Motive sounding loud (p. 196, syst. 2), and that of Renunciation (syst. 3): and the Flight Motive marking the release of Freia (p. 196, syst. 5). The curse of the Ring is instantly operative; for, in a quarrel over its possession, Fafner slays his brother Fasolt. The Curse Motive is heard (p. 200, syst. 3) and the Nibelungs baleful syncopations (p. 201, syst. 1). Fricka coaxes Wotan to the newly-built and dearly-bought castle (Motives of Enchantment of Love, p. 202, syst. 2, and Valhalla, syst. 4). Donner summons a thunder storm to clear the air and the gloom that hangs over all. With the gathering clouds is heard Donner's Storm Magic (p. 204, syst. 1):

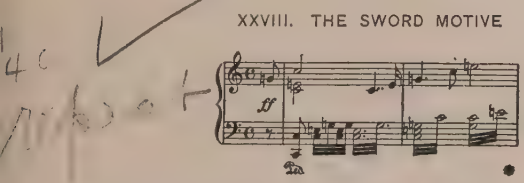
XXVII. DONNER'S STORM MAGIC



The storm clears; a bright rainbow is seen spanning the abyss between the cliff and the heights of Valhalla. The Rainbow is prefigured by an iridescent play of instrumental tone color in the orchestra (p. 208, syst. 3).

The gods gaze on the glorious sight, as the music increases in richness and intensity; Wotan apostrophizes the castle as the shelter of the gods from approaching night. Then he is as though seized by a great thought — and that thought is expressed by the brilliant and energetic intonation by the orchestra of the following (p. 213, syst. 1), which is:

XXVIII. THE SWORD MOTIVE



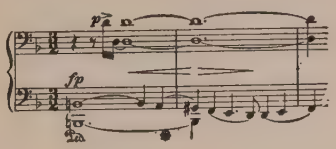
The thought is of the hero that he will beget to save the race of the gods, represented thus by his all-conquering sword. The score contains no stage directions at this point; the present day tradition at Bayreuth directs that Wotan shall stoop, pick up and brandish a sword that has been presumably left over from the Nibelung's hoard, thus

grossly materializing a poetic idea much better left to be suggested by the music.

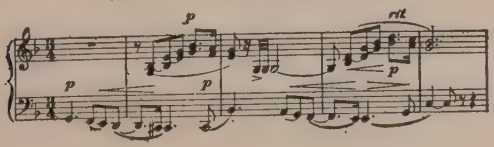
The Valhalla Motive resounds (p. 213, syst. 4), and the gods start to walk over the rainbow arch to the castle. Loge, left behind, is ashamed to share in their dealings. "They are hastening on to their end," he says, yet he joins the celestial procession. As they cross the river, below them are heard the Rhine daughters lamenting the loss of their gold (Praise of the Rhine Gold, p. 216, syst. 28; Rhine Gold fanfare, p. 217, syst. 1). The gods smile, but pass on in majestic company, while the full power of the orchestra intones the Valhalla Motive and the Rainbow Motive; and so the Prelude to the Trilogy is closed.

II. THE VALKYRIE

In "The Valkyrie" we enter into a different atmosphere, one of storm and stress and the passions and destinies of human beings upon the earth's surface blindly following celestial plans. The prelude itself puts us into the midst of the tempest with which the drama is opened. A stormy figure plays through the orchestra rising to fury, as the hammer strokes of Donner's Storm Magic are heard (p. 3, syst. 2, etc.). As the curtain is lifted upon Hunding's hut, we hear:

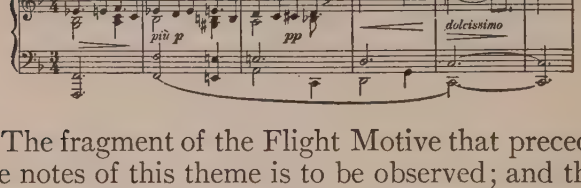
XXIX. MOTIVE OF THE WEARIED SIEGMUND

(p. 5, syst. 4). Sieglinde enters, and as she leans over the exhausted stranger, wondering at his condition, there is joined to the theme which represents him, another, which embodies her and her sympathy for him (p. 7, syst. 3, in the treble clef):

XXX. SIEGLINDE'S SYMPATHY



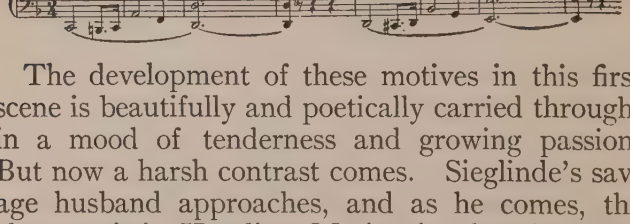
As she gives him to drink from a horn of water, and he makes a sign of his gratitude, the motive of her love is heard (p. 9, syst. 2):

XXXI. SIEGLINDE'S LOVE

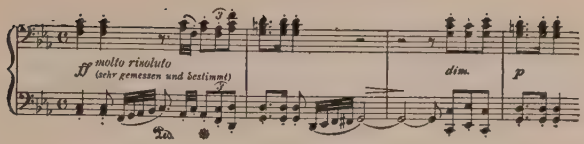


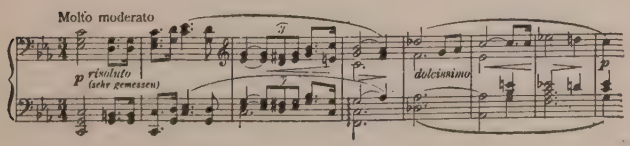
The fragment of the Flight Motive that precedes the notes of this theme is to be observed; and thus joined, it occurs repeatedly in the next succeeding portion of the drama. As the man and the woman find themselves more and more bound by the fetters of love, there appears still another motive that relates to them, the Volsung pair; the motive of the Woes of the Volsungs (p. 15, syst. 1). It appears first in close union with the motive of Sieglinde's Sympathy:

XXXII. THE WOES OF THE VOLSUNGS

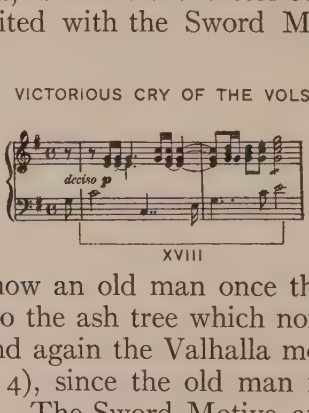


The development of these motives in this first scene is beautifully and poetically carried through, in a mood of tenderness and growing passion. But now a harsh contrast comes. Sieglinde's savage husband approaches, and as he comes, the characteristic Hunding Motive is played by the heavy brass instruments:

XXXIII. HUNDING'S MOTIVE

He announces his own name, and asks his guest's, and we hear the motive of the Woes of the Volsungs, as Siegmund goes on in mystifying fashion to tell what his name is not, and to describe his storm-tossed life. As he tells of the disappearance of his father, Wolfe, who is none other than Wotan, the solemn strains of the Valhalla Motive are intoned (p. 26, syst. 2). The Motive of Sieglinde's Love is heard (p. 26, syst. 3, p. 28, syst. 2), and Sympathy (p. 28, syst. 4), accompanying him; the Woes of the Volsungs in a quicker or "diminished" form (p. 29, syst. 1), the motive of the Wearied Siegmund (p. 31, syst. 2), the figure that in the prelude represented the storm (p. 31, syst. 3), and finally, as he ends his story, the motive of the Woes of the Volsungs, in its original form (p. 32, syst. 1), all appear. "Now," he says to Sieglinde, "you may know why I may not be called Friedmund": and there comes an impressive motive denoting the heroic lineage of the Volsungs (p. 32, syst. 2):

XXXIV. HEROIC THEME OF THE VOLSUNGS

The scenes that follow, culminating in the love duet between Siegmund and Sieglinde, bring in most of the motives that have appeared since the curtain parted; and in addition are to be noted the Flight Motive (p. 35, syst. 3), and the Sword Motive as Sieglinde, going to follow her husband, indicates with her eyes a particular spot on the trunk of the ash tree (p. 35, syst. 5). Left alone, Siegmund calls upon Wälse for the sword, he has promised him in time of need: and as he calls, looks toward the ash tree again, where, lighted by a sudden flaring up of the fire on the hearth, he sees a sword hilt sticking out — and then again the Sword Motive is sonorously proclaimed (p. 39, syst. 2). Sieglinde returns and tells Siegmund of a sword she wishes he might win for himself, and as she speaks, is heard the Victorious Cry of the Volsungs united with the Sword Motive (p. 44, syst. 1).

XXXV. VICTORIOUS CRY OF THE VOLSUNGS



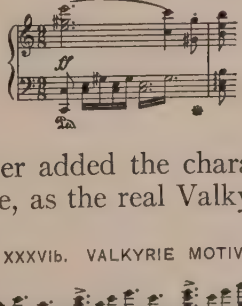
XVIII

She relates how an old man once thrust a sword to its hilt into the ash tree which none could ever withdraw, and again the Valhalla motive is heard (p. 44, syst. 4), since the old man is none other than Wotan. The Sword Motive and the Victorious Cry accompany her outburst of yearning and Siegmund's avowal of his love. Follows the long love song of the two, a broad, passionate, and

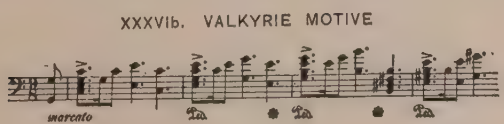
heroic melody, in which the Love Motive (xxxi) the Valhalla Motive, the Flight Motive (p. 58, syst. 1), the Heroic theme with the Sword Motive (p. 67, syst. 1), the Freia Motive (p. 61, syst. 2 and 4), are mingled. Finally, in the height of his exaltation, Siegmund springs up, seizes the sword hilt, and pulls it from the tree trunk, in triumph. The Victorious Cry of the Volsungs, the Sword Motive, the motive of Compact (p. 70, syst. 4), accompany this glorious scene, one of the most thrilling that Wagner has created. The orchestral finale is developed from Sieglinde's Love Motive, with splendid and tumultuous passion.

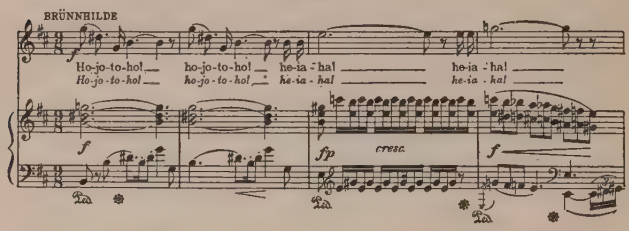
We return in the second act to the company of the gods. The prelude is built upon a strange distortion of the Sword Motive in nine-eight rhythm and minor harmonies, united with the Flight Motive, which goes over into the closely related Cry of the Valkyrie (p. 79, syst. 2):

XXXVIa. CRY OF THE VALKYRIE

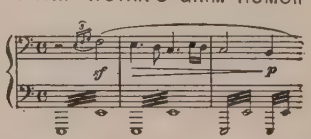


to which is later added the characteristic accompaniment figure, as the real Valkyrie Motive.

XXXVIb. VALKYRIE MOTIVE

and to which belongs, as further on appears, the trill and the downward rush of chromatic sixths (p. 82, syst. 2):

XXXVIc.

These motives accompany the interview of Wotan and his daughter Brünnhilde, in which he charges her to shield the Volsung in his approaching fight with Hunding. Comes Fricka, before whose injured majesty Brünnhilde disappears; and in the long debate which follows between her and her spouse, and in which she represents and enforces the sanctity of the marriage tie by demanding the death of the guilty Volsung pair, many of the motives already made known reappear. As Fricka gradually drives him from his purpose to protect the Volsungs, even to the point of withdrawing the invincible might of Nothung, the motive of Wotan's Grim Humor is heard (p. 99, syst. 2):

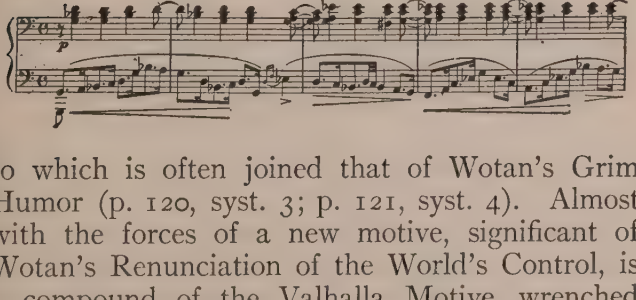
XXXVII. WOTAN'S GRIM HUMOR



Its connection with the motives of Compact and of Renunciation, both musically and logically, is

not difficult to perceive. Brünnhilde returns with a return of the motives associated with her (p. 104, syst. 4, etc.). Wotan swears to comply with Fricka's demand (Compact Motive, p. 107, syst. 2), and is sunk in the gloomiest brooding at the predicament in which he finds himself thereby. (Curse Motive, p. 108, syst. 1), from which Brünnhilde seeks to lift him. The following scene, in which Wotan discloses the breadth and depth of his distress, the "gods' despair" the nature of the fetters in which he has found himself, is compacted of the most significant motives relating to the causes and the chain of events that have brought him where he is. A new one is introduced when he tells of the hero who will dare to do what to him is denied, in extricating him from his plight, the motive of the God's Plight, in which the traits of the Norns and the Dusk of the Gods Motive may be discerned (p. 120, syst. 4):

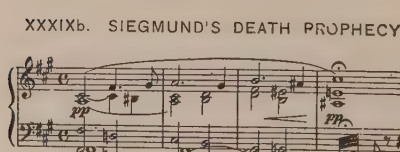
XXXVIII. MOTIVE OF THE GOD'S PLIGHT



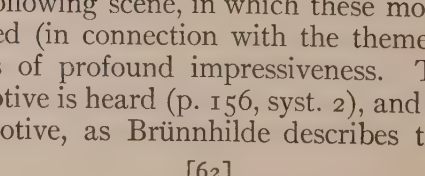
to which is often joined that of Wotan's Grim Humor (p. 120, syst. 3; p. 121, syst. 4). Almost with the forces of a new motive, significant of Wotan's Renunciation of the World's Control, is a compound of the Valhalla Motive, wrenched into minor harmonies, with the Rhine Gold fanfare that appears on page 129, system 4.

Heralded by the Flight Motive, Siegmund and Sieglinde, fleeing from the wrath of Hagen, rush in. Her Love Motive softens the ominous, foreboding tone (p. 141, syst. 5). The rhythmic outline of Hunding's Motive is heard (p. 147, syst. 4), suggesting his approach; and Sieglinde, beside herself, falls unconscious in Siegmund's arms, after an outburst of terror. As he sits, supporting her head upon his lap, Brünnhilde appears, notifying to him his approaching death, his removal to join the band of heroes at Valhalla. Her coming is announced by a solemn intonation of the motive of Fate with its first questioning chord, resolving in an upward inflexion (p. 152, syst. 4), followed by an upward mounting phrase, prophetic of Siegmund's death:

XXXIXa. MOTIVE OF FATE



XXXIXb. SIEGMUND'S DEATH PROPHECY



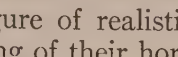
The following scene, in which these motives are elaborated (in connection with the theme of Valhalla), is of profound impressiveness. The Valkyrie Motive is heard (p. 156, syst. 2), and then the Freia Motive, as Brünnhilde describes the Wish

Maidens who shall wait on the heroes (p. 157, syst. 1); then the motive of Sieglinde's Love as Siegmund learns that Sieglinde may not accompany him thither (p. 158, syst. 3). He scornfully rejects Brünnhilde's notification of his death decree, and when he is told that the magic power of his sword has been revoked, and that death is his doom, starts to slay his beloved and their unborn child; a hurried and distorted version of the Death Prophecy (xxxix*b*) appears as Brünnhilde stays his hand (p. 168, syst. 4), and in a passionate outburst of sympathy promises to both their lives, and she rushes forth. Sieglinde slumbers on in Siegmund's arms as Hunding's horn heralds his approach. He leaves her with a kiss (Freia Motive, p. 174, syst. 1), and hastens to find the foe. The Flight Motive, the Sword Motive, and in the increasing darkness, Donner's Thunder Motive (p. 175, syst. 3), are heard. In the gloom the battle takes place; with the shrill Valkyrie trills and the galloping bass motive, Brünnhilde appears (p. 179, syst. 3, 4), to protect the hero; but suddenly Wotan emerges from the darkness, stretching out his spear, upon which Siegmund's sword is splintered, as we hear the Sword Motive in minor, conjoined with the Compact Motive (p. 180, syst. 1). Siegmund falls, pierced by Hunding's spear. The motive of the Menial (signifying the Nibelung's triumph) is heard (p. 180, syst. 2, 3), and the Heroic Theme and the Fate Motive sound solemnly (p. 180, syst. 3, 4); in the gloom Brünnhilde lifts Sieglinde to her horse and bears her away. Hunding, having accomplished

the purpose to which Wotan is pledged, falls dead before the wave of his hand, as the god gazes sadly on Siegmund's body. Then the thought of Brünnhilde's disobedience rouses him to sudden anger, and he storms forth, as through the orchestra runs the motive of the God's Plight.

The third act opens upon a rocky peak where the Valkyries are gathering; the orchestral prelude is the well-known "Ride of the Valkyries," a vivid and strongly characterized picture built up entirely upon the several sections of the Valkyrie Motive, with which is associated a closely allied rhythmic figure of realistic character, suggesting the galloping of their horses:

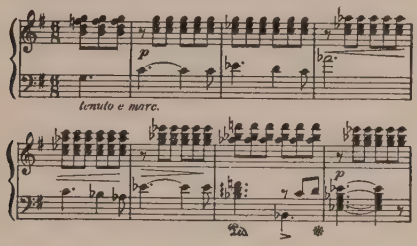
XL. THE VALKYRIES' RIDE



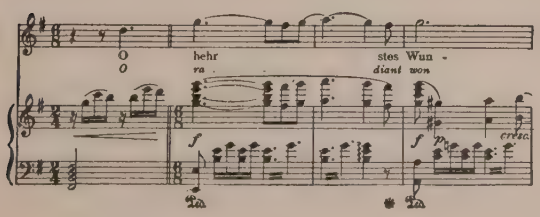
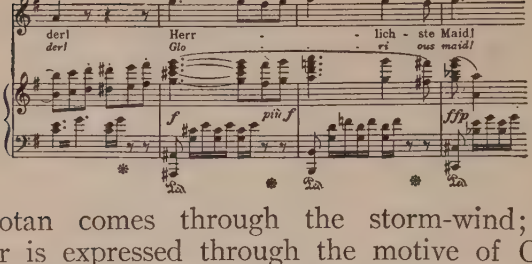
The gathering of the nine sisters gives occasion for one of Wagner's concerted pieces, in which, though they are rare in his later music dramas, he shows the highest skill and feeling for effect in vocal part-writing. As Brünnhilde comes, carrying Sieglinde upon her horse, the motive of the God's Plight appears (p. 203, syst. 1), then the diminished version of the Death Prophecy (p. 204, syst. 1), and the motive of Flight (syst. 2). Sieglinde's refuge, where her child is to be born, is to be Fafner's cave; and as this is told, the motive of the Ring (p. 224, syst. 1), which the dragon is guarding, and of the Dragon (xxiii, syst. 2), accompany the reference. Brünnhilde announces

to her that she bears in her womb the most glorious hero of the world, Siegfried; and now for the first time his motive is set forth (p. 226, syst. 3):

XLI. SIEGFRIED, THE VOLSUNG

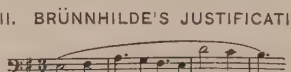


For him she shall keep the fragments of the shattered sword which Brünnhilde has gathered from the field of his father's death, and the Sword Motive gleams through the orchestra (p. 227, syst. 1). Profoundly moved, Sieglinde bursts forth in exaltation "O radiant wonder!" etc., in the wonderful theme that is to play so wonderful a part in the climax of the Trilogy at the close of "The Dusk of the Gods." The theme is that of Redemption through Love (p. 228, syst. 1):

XLII. REDEMPTION THROUGH LOVE



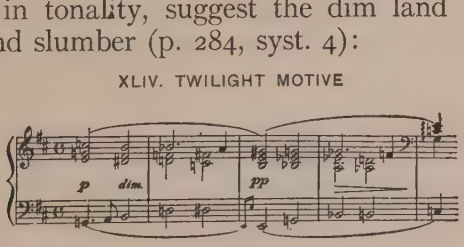
Wotan comes through the storm-wind; his anger is expressed through the motive of Grim Humor (p. 240, syst. 1), and a development of it through the musical device known as augmentation (as appears first on p. 243, syst. 3).

The scene between the angry father and the disobedient daughter, that closes the drama is one of the finest of all Wagner's imaginings. It is carried through with the most sustained power and unending resource, complete and inevitable in its expression of the great emotional climax it depicts — the change and merging of the god's anger into sorrowing love, the submissiveness of the imploring daughter, the consolation she finds in the form of punishment her father decrees. Her wonderful song of justification is based on the theme that is brought immediately to a hearing (p. 265, syst. 1).

XLIII. BRÜNNHILDE'S JUSTIFICATION

That and the motive of Wotan's Grim Humor (xxxvii) constitute most of the material out of which the next pages of the score are compacted. From the latter has been developed the little phrase (p. 265, syst. 5), that is frequently heard in the

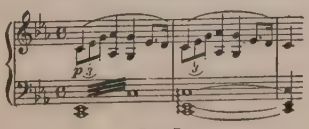
orchestra in more or less fullness, and the persistent running figure that envelopes much that is now heard (p. 269, syst. 4, and the following). Wotan's reply rises to a height of tragic pathos, as he discloses the full measure of his own despair. It is not granted him to end his own unending sorrow in the wreck of a ruined world (Renunciation, p. 276, syst. 3; Curse, immediately following). Brünnhilde in vain pleads for a mitigation of her punishment, which he has decreed to be the loss of her divine attributes (Compact, p. 278, syst. 2). In vain she urges that, as a mortal maiden, she may have the heroic child of the Volsungs for her spouse (Heroic Theme, p. 281, syst. 2; Siegfried the Volsung, syst. 3). Wotan announces to her that she shall be locked in sleep; and a series of descending chromatic harmonies, vague and unsteady in tonality, suggest the dim land of twilight and slumber (p. 284, syst. 4):

XLIV. TWILIGHT MOTIVE



A gently rhythmical motive first heard in minor (p. 285, syst. 4), then later in major, reflects the picture of sleep:

XLV. SLUMBER MOTIVE



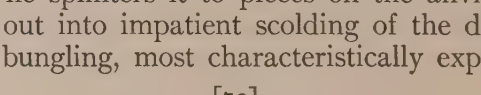
Whoever shall find her and awaken her shall possess her for his wife.

Brünnhilde prays to be surrounded by terrors that shall keep from her all but the hero without fear (p. 286, syst. 3) — by a wall of fire; and the motive of the Fire Magic is heard in flickering arpeggios accompanied by the Valkyrie Motive (p. 288, syst. 2). Wotan gazes at his daughter in deep emotion, and the Valkyrie and Slumber Motives are sounded in heroic exaltation (p. 289, syst. 3, p. 290, syst. 1). The daughter's high and noble spirit breaks down the father's anger and he gives her his farewell in a long, sustained song of glorified melody of indescribable godlike breadth, tenderness, and dignity. He grants her request; the barrier of flame shall keep away all but the one fearless hero. It is accompanied by a marvellous orchestral interweaving of fragments and extensions and efflorescences of the Slumber Motive, Valkyrie Motive, the Death Prophecy, the Fire Motive, Loge's flaming chromatics, Siegfried's Motive and an ennobled and broadened development of Brünnhilde's song of Justification (p. 294, syst. 2). The Slumber Motive becomes more predominant (p. 295, syst. 2). The Renunciation Motive points with its ominous tones to Wotan's painful surrender (p. 297, syst. 3). He kisses her godhead from her, and the veiled harmonies of the Twilight Motive (p. 297, syst. 4), descend; the soft movement of the Slumber Motive returns (p. 298, syst. 2), united with the melody to which Wotan has just sung his farewell. The Fate Motive is heard (p. 299, syst. 1).

With the motive of Compact Wotan summons Loge. His scintillating chromatic trills accompany his appearance as streams of flame, and with the Magic Fire Charm united with the Slumber Motive (p. 302, syst. 3). Finally the Siegfried Motive is added to them through the majestic proclamation of the trombones (p. 303, syst. 3), and the melody of Wotan's farewell (p. 304, syst. 1) follows it. The end comes in the Slumber Motive and the Fire music, as Wotan slowly and sorrowfully disappears.

Again the scene and the spirit, the atmosphere and the music change completely. There shall be life, human and joyous, and the joy of life, in plenty; but first we are taken into the gloom and squalor of the Nibelung's abode. Mime sits and ponders in his forest cave. The motive of Reflection (xvi) runs through the orchestral prelude. What he ponders over is suggested by the motive of the Rising Hoard (p. 1, syst. 3). The Smithy Motive comes in (syst. 5), the motives of the Menial (p. 2, syst. 3), and the Ring Motive (p. 3, syst. 5). Mime's despondent musings bring him to the thoughts of Fafner the dragon (Dragon Motive, p. 7, syst. 7), and the Sword that would lay him low (p. 8, syst. 3). In the midst of his dronings enters Siegfried, and the horn announces him in the clear and vigorous blast that through the rest of the Trilogy is associated with the impetuous child of the forest (p. 11, syst. 1):

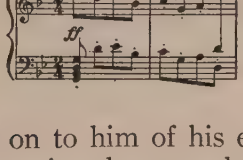
XLVI. SIEGFRIED'S HORN CALL



He demands of Mime the sword he has been at work on (Sword Motive, p. 15, syst. 4), but, testing it, he splinters it to pieces on the anvil, and bursts out into impatient scolding of the dwarf's paltry bungling, most characteristically expressed

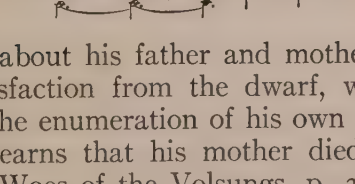
by a motive denoting here his impatience, in other places his strenuous activity (p. 16, syst. 1):

XLVII. SIEGFRIED'S STRENUOUS ACTIVITY



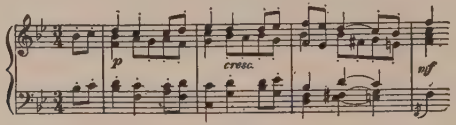
Mime prates on to him of his excellent care of him, of his fostering love: and in the story a rhythmically altered and shortened version of the Smithy Theme has a prominent place (p. 19, syst. 1). But Siegfried is all impatience at this futile tale and demands another kind of love, such as he sees in nature out of doors, and the sweet melody of Love in Nature adds point to his question (p. 27, syst. 3):

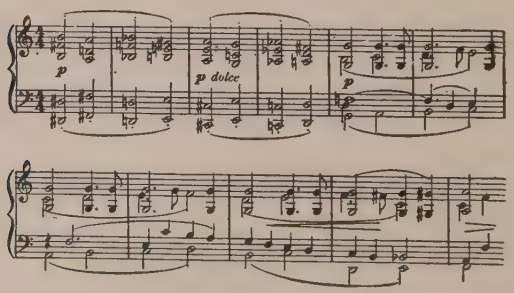
XLVIII. LOVE IN NATURE



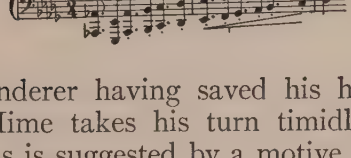
He asks about his father and mother, but can get no satisfaction from the dwarf, who always returns to the enumeration of his own deserts, till finally he learns that his mother died in giving him birth (Woes of the Volsungs, p. 37, syst. 4). The scene is elaborated with poetic beauty and psychological insight. Finally Mime fetches Siegfried, as a proof of his story, the broken pieces of

his father's sword, which Siegfried declares he must weld anew, and a brilliant variant of the Sword Motive in six-eight rhythm leaps from the orchestra (p. 44, syst. 1). Leaving Mime to wrestle with this task, which he knows he cannot perform, Siegfried storms forth into the forest to the gay strains of his Song of Wandering (p. 46, syst. 2):

XLIX. SONG OF WANDERING

Left alone, Mime is soon interrupted in his worries by the entrance of an unwelcome guest, Wotan, who is traversing the world as the Wanderer. He is announced by his Motive of Wandering, in which the constant shifting and wandering of the tonality of the first measures, through chromatic changes in the harmony, as well as the tranquil dignity and measured tread of the last, are significant (p. 50, syst. 3):

L. WOTAN'S MOTIVE OF WANDERING

The ensuing scene of the three riddles propounded by each for the stake of his head, a scene full of the traits of prehistoric legends, introduces a throng of motives that have gone before. As the Wanderer describes the gods who dwell on the cloud-hidden heights, ruled by Wotan, a new motive appears, the motive of the Gods' Might (p. 62, syst. 4):

LI. MOTIVE OF THE GODS' MIGHT



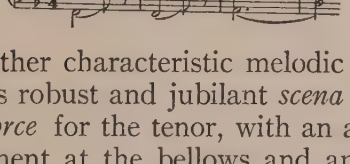
The Wanderer having saved his head by his answers, Mime takes his turn timidly and nervously, — as is suggested by a motive of descending chromatics that introduces his trial (p. 66, syst. 2).

The Wanderer's third question as to who will weld the splinters of Nothung the sword, throws him into despair — though its answer is lightly suggested by the orchestra with the theme of Siegfried the Volsung (p. 74, syst. 1). Siegfried's theme of Strenuous Activity covers his confusion (syst. 2), and the theme of Renunciation suggests the outcome of his vain quest for a response (p. 75, syst. 2). The Wanderer claims the victory and Mime's head, but gives his opponent the answer after scornfully commenting on Mime's failure to ask for the solution of the problem that is tormenting him. The Wanderer's Motive

(p. 75, syst. 4), Renunciation (p. 76, syst. 1), the Sword (syst. 2), the Compact, combined with the Smithy Motive (syst. 2), and the Dragon (syst. 4) accompany his words. Only he who has never known fear shall forge Nothung anew, says Wotan: he leaves Mime's head forfeit to him — and who that is we hear from the orchestra in the motive of Siegfried the Volsung (p. 77, syst. 3). The Wanderer turns away smiling. Mime falls, overwhelmed with terror and despair, and the orchestra gives expression in shivering chromatic tremolos to his state of fear. The tremolo passes into Loge's figure as the sunlight strikes into the recesses of the cave, and fills the creature of darkness with a new terror, in which Siegfried finds him as he returns, with his Song of Wandering (p. 81, syst. 1), and the signal of his Strenuous Activity (p. 87, syst. 4). Mime tries to frighten the fearless boy with his own fear, that he may feel sure of his forfeited head. He tells him he has promised his mother to teach him this wonderful thing; but not all his graphic words nor all Loge's fireworks can succeed, though Siegfried is a willing pupil. Only from the slumbering Brünnhilde shall he learn fear; and so, through all this, comes forth more and more clearly Brünnhilde's Slumber Motive; at first chromatically twisted and weakened, to fit with Mime's mood (p. 90, syst. 3, 4; p. 91, syst. 2), then, in the clear C major, in its proper form (p. 91, syst. 4). Then Mime tries the dragon on him; but only to rouse anew Siegfried's eagerness for the sword to wield against this interesting creature; and he demands

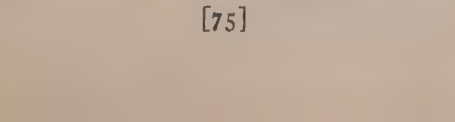
the pieces, that he himself may forge the blade. The great scene of the forging that follows is introduced with a leaping triplet motive in augmented intervals, that runs through much of it, clearly derived from the first part of Siegfried's Horn Call. His successful progress in the task gives Mime much to think of — how shall he gain the ring, if Siegfried slays the dragon? (Ring Motive, p. 105, syst. 2). As Siegfried goes on he sings an immensely vigorous apostrophe to the sword whose name he has demanded of the dwarf, in which the Nothung Phrase plays an important part (p. 107, syst. 1):

LII. NOTHUNG PHRASE



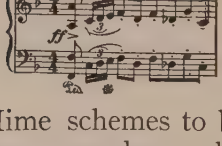
Several other characteristic melodic figures run through this robust and jubilant *scena* — as much a *tour de force* for the tenor, with an added artistic requirement at the bellows and anvil, as any in Italian opera. The most important of these is the motive of Siegfried's Triumph (p. 115, syst. 4):

LIII. SIEGFRIED'S TRIUMPH



and the motive of the Forging (p. 119, syst. 4):

LIV. MOTIVE OF THE FORGING



Meanwhile Mime schemes to brew a poison to administer to the young hero when he has slain Fafner, and potters over it, imagining great things from possessing the gold. The Smithy Motive intrudes itself upon Mime's fancies (p. 129, syst. 2; p. 132, syst. 2, etc.), as Siegfried sings his triumphant song, and the curtain falls as he cleaves the anvil in twain with his irresistible blade, now his to win all the world has in store for him.

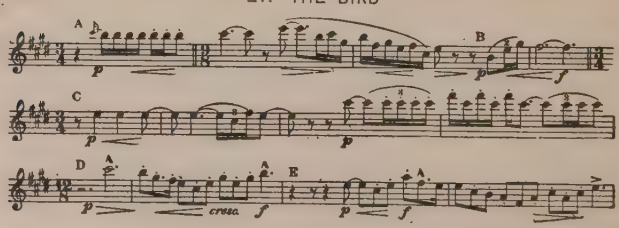
A wood shrouded in gloom, before the entrance to Fafner's fearsome cavern, is shown in the second act. Gloomy and fearsome music accompanies the picture, in which a transformed and darkened version of the Giants' Motive plays much part (p. 136, syst. 1); so do the Dragon Motive (syst. 2), the Ring (syst. 6), the Curse (p. 137, syst. 4), and the Nibelung's Work of Destruction (p. 138, syst. 1). Alberich is seen in the darkness, brooding and watching for the dragon's slayer. The galloping figure of the Ride (xl, p. 140, syst. 1), united with the theme of the Plight of the Gods precede the approach of Wotan the Wanderer on his horse. There is a suggestion of the Valhalla Theme (p. 142, syst. 2) and the motive of Wandering accompanies Wotan's declaration in answer to Alberich's sullen and scornful greeting, that he comes to watch, not to do (p. 143, syst. 4). In the dialogue that follows, the two natures are

wonderfully differentiated in the music. Alberich's taunts are accompanied by the motive of Wotan's Grim Humor (p. 144, syst. 4), the motive of Compact (p. 145, syst. 4), the Nibelung's Work of Destruction (p. 147, syst. 1), the Ring (p. 148, syst. 3), Loge's motive (p. 149, syst. 1), and finally, the motive of the Sword (p. 149, syst. 4) the symbol of his hope of regaining the ring, through Fafner's death. Wotan rouses the sleeping dragon to warn him of his approaching doom, who demands only to be let sleep; and with a bit of world philosophy (motive of the Primeval Element, p. 157, syst. 1), leaves him to face the situation. The Riding Motive accompanies his departure, with the harmonies of his Wandering Motive (p. 158, syst. 3) and a strain of the parting song he had sung to Brünnhilde (p. 159, syst. 1).

Siegfried and Mime approach, on their errand, as day breaks. A fragment of Siegfried's song at the forge is heard (p. 160, syst. 5), and other familiar motives, including the Brünnhilde Slumber Motive advising us that he is not to learn fear from the dragon, but from her. Mime describes the coming terrors of the monster, but Siegfried plans his course of action cheerfully (Heroic Theme of the Volsungs, p. 164, syst. 4, Strenuous Activity, p. 165, syst. 3). Mine leaves him, and, reclining under the trees, he ponders on his hatred for his foster father, and on the mother whom he never saw. The scene is one of the most poetically beautiful of all Wagner's picturings of nature brought into relation with human

tenderness; of exquisite art and unerring feeling in the instrumental coloring and suffused with sheer musical beauty; while its pictorial quality and its delineation of the wood are irresistible. As an excerpt for concert performance it has become familiar as the "Waldweben," — the Sounds of the Forest. There is the rustle of the trees in the whispering violin figure, in thirds and sixths (p. 171, ff.) that we hear so much of. From the theme of the Woes of the Volsungs (xxxii) is evolved the beautiful melody that accompanies Siegfried's musings about his mother (p. 174, syst. 2). The theme of Love in Nature (xlviii) is fittingly associated with it in its wistful tenderness (p. 175, syst. 3). Freia's Motive with its characteristic undulating accompaniment is joined to them (p. 176, syst. 2), in harmony with the mood and the color scheme. Now comes the bird, which entrances Siegfried with its singing; and its music Wagner has devised with the subtlest and truest feeling for the possibilities of raising bird sounds, mostly unmusical, to the higher power of music, while still retaining their characteristic charm. He thus represents Siegfried's "gracious birdling" (pp. 176–178):

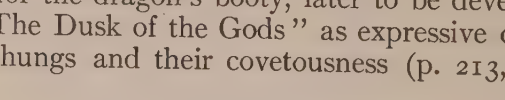
LV. THE BIRD



As a way of understanding this strange language, Siegfried attempts to imitate it on a reed; but with lamentably harsh and unmusical results. He gives it up, and blows on his own horn a "blithesome wood-song" — the horn call, the Siegfried Motive, the Sword Motive (p. 184). The sound wakes the sleeping dragon, who comes out to devour the venturesome disturber of his peace. In the fight that follows the orchestral background is made up of developments of the Dragon Motive, the Giants, the Sword Motive, and Siegfried's Horn Call. The fearless hero is victorious and as he pierces the dragon's heart, the theme of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction is predominant (p. 190, syst. 4), followed by the Curse (p. 191, syst. 3). Dying, the dragon asks his slayer's name (Siegfried, the Volsung, p. 194, syst. 2), and warns him, in a passage of real pathos and touching power, of the machinations of Mime, thus putting one good deed to the credit of a misspent life (the Nibelung's Work of Destruction, p. 193, syst. 2). Siegfried's hand being spotted with the dragon's blood in withdrawing the sword, it burns like fire, and he puts it to his mouth. Then it seems to him that he understands the voice of the bird as it speaks to him. That voice bids him discover the ring among the dragon's treasure. He enters the cave to find it, and Mime steals back to the scene of the conflict, with his little pot of poison for the victor. Alberich also emerges from his hiding-place to bar his brother's way. They have their quarrel over the spoils, in the course of which the motives of

the Tarnhelm (p. 200, syst. 2), of Reflection (syst. 4), of the Smithy (p. 202, syst. 1), Alberich's Cry of Triumph (p. 204, syst. 3), the Ring (p. 205, syst. 2), and the Rhine Gold (p. 206, syst. 1), show forth the subject of their dispute and are welded together in a way to set forth clearly the harsh and domineering nature of the one, the feeble shiftiness and impotent avarice of the other. Siegfried emerges from the cavern, thoughtfully regarding his booty, the Ring and the Tarnhelm, which alone he has selected from the treasure, and which he considers only as trifles that will vouch for his victory over the dragon, nothing more. Mime sidles up to him, very friendly, with his flowery compliments to him and to himself, in the music of mock-friendliness and full of childish double-meanings. A new motive comes forth for an instant here, denoting his covetousness for the dragon's booty, later to be developed in "The Dusk of the Gods" as expressive of the Gibichungs and their covetousness (p. 213, syst. 2):

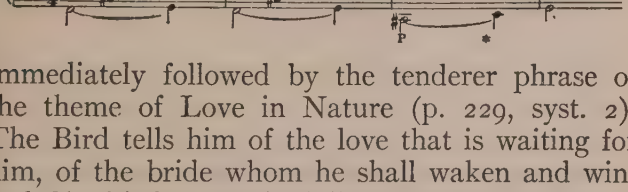
LVI. MOTIVE OF COVETOUSNESS
(The Gibichungs)



But Siegfried repulses him — a strain of the Bird's song suggests whence his instinctive dislike has gained the reinforcement of reason (p. 213, syst. 4; p. 216, syst. 4) — and as Mime tries anew to cajole him into taking his poisonous brew, he

suddenly fells him with his sword. Alberich's mocking laughter is heard, in the Smithy Motive, together with the motive of Reflection (p. 222, syst. 1). Siegfried picks the body up and throws it into the mouth of the cave to keep company with the dead dragon (Horn Call, p. 222, syst. 3; Smithy Motive, syst. 4; Giant Motive, p. 224, syst. 1; Rising Hoard, syst. 3; Ring, syst. 3). Once more Siegfried turns to his friendly Bird, to the music of the theme of Love in Nature (p. 226, syst. 4), and as he sadly confides his desolate feelings, a new motive springs brilliantly and aggressively from the orchestra, a motive of passionate longing, expressive of his yearning for love (p. 228, syst. 3):

LVII. YEARNING FOR LOVE

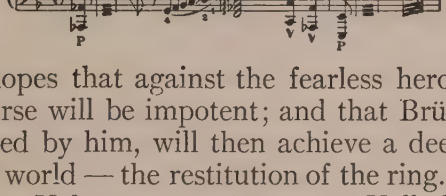


immediately followed by the tenderer phrase of the theme of Love in Nature (p. 229, syst. 2). The Bird tells him of the love that is waiting for him, of the bride whom he shall waken and win, and Siegfried starts joyfully on under this guidance to find her. Among the themes that are welded together in this magnificently animated scene are those of Siegfried the Volsung (p. 234, syst. 2), Brünnhilde's Slumber (syst. 3), and the various sections of the Bird's own song, as it flies on, leading Siegfried toward the blazing rock.

The third act opens with a stormy orchestral prelude in which the Riding Motive and the motive of the God's Plight are first united, and then in the bass, the motive of the Compact (p. 239, syst. 4); the harmonies are transformed into those of the Wanderer's Motive (p. 240). The scene depicts a wild, rocky place in the mountains. Wotan is at hand, and we are in the realm of mother Erda, whom he summons from sleep to answer his question, how a god may conquer his care? The scene is conceived in a spirit of gloomy, unearthly restlessness. The god foresees the end of his rule and of his race. The music is largely dominated by a phrase derived from the Flight Motive (p. 242, syst. 3, etc.). His call is accompanied by the Norn Motive (p. 243, syst. 2) and its converse, that of the Dusk of the Gods (syst. 4, etc.). As Erda's uncanny shape appears in bluish light within the cavern, the mysterious harmonies of the Twilight Motive are sounded (p. 244, syst. 3) following the motive of Compact, and the motive of Fate (p. 245, syst. 1). The Norns, she tells him, wake while she sleeps; why does he not ask them? They are in thrall to the world, says Wotan: the Ring Motive here, because the magic of the ring still rules the world (p. 248, syst. 3), and the motive of Renunciation (syst. 4). Darkness o'erspreads her spirit, is Erda's avowal; her wisdom is waning; a conqueror once overcame even her knowledge, and she bore him a Wish Maiden (Valhalla, p. 249, syst. 4), bold and wise (Brünnhilde's Slumber Motive, p. 250, syst. 2; Fate Motive, syst. 3). Why does he not ask her? With

the melody of her Justification (p. 251, syst. 1), and the Valkyrie's Motive (syst. 4), and closing with a phrase from his noble song of farewell in "The Valkyrie" (p. 252, syst. 4), he explains the Valkyrie's fate to Erda, who is dazed by the change that has come upon the world; her wisdom is powerless before the new order of things. But Wotan himself can face the downfall of the Eternals without dismay — he leaves gladly his heritage to the Volsung; and therewith is announced the grandiose Theme of the World's Heritage (p. 257, syst. 3):

LVIII. THE WORLD'S HERITAGE



He hopes that against the fearless hero, Alberich's curse will be impotent; and that Brünnhilde, awakened by him, will then achieve a deed to set free the world — the restitution of the ring. (Siegfried, the Volsung, p. 258, syst. 1; Valhalla, syst. 2; Ring, syst. 4, — now in the clear F major, — the love theme originally associated with Sieglinde, p. 259, syst. 1, as referable to the love which bore him Brünnhilde) and sends Erda back to her endless sleep.

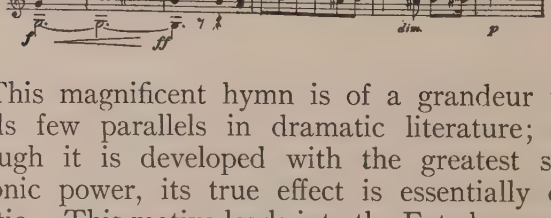
She disappears; and again the Bird's melody is heard. Siegfried and his guide are approaching. Wotan, still standing where he was, asks the boy whither he is going; questions him further as to

his doings; and as the boy recounts them, the themes that have been associated with them again pass before us. Wotan laughs in pleasure at the young fellow's sturdiness, which rouses his ire, and he bids the Wanderer stand from his way; then curiously asks him about his great hat, his missing eye. His impatience is increased at the old man's declaration that if he knew whom he was addressing, he would refrain from his scoffing (Motive of Wotan's Grim Humor, p. 272, syst. 2), and warns him against his wrath. That wrath rises, and with it increase the convolutions of the motive. Wotan attempts to restrain his progress toward the sleeping Brünnhilde, describes the sea of fire that surrounds her (Fire motive, Riding motive, p. 276). The glow of the flame appears high up on the mountain; with it Siegfried's impatience increases (Siegfried, the Volsung, p. 277, syst. 3), and as Wotan tries to bar his way with the sacred spear, he hews it in pieces with his sword (Sword motive, p. 279, syst. 2). The motive of Compact is heard, broken by pauses (syst. 3). Wotan tells him to fare forth, he cannot stop him. Siegfried mounts toward the brightening glow; the music increases in richness and complexity. Among the motives here are those of Siegfried the Volsung (p. 280, syst. 2), Praise of the Rhine Gold (syst. 3), the various sections of the Bird's song; Siegfried's Horn Call (p. 281, syst. 3), and the Fire Motive (syst. 3). Siegfried disappears up the mountain side, while this gorgeous orchestral interlude is unrolled. The music gradually falls into the quieter strains of Brünn-

hilde's Slumber Motive (p. 283, syst. 6), as the mountain side is hidden in a dissolving cloud. It sinks to the gentlest pianissimo as the cloud passes away and shows the mountain top upon which Brünnhilde lies asleep, as Wotan left her at the close of "The Valkyrie." A morning light gleams in the bright blue sky. In the orchestra is heard the mysterious harmonies of the Fate Motive (p. 285, syst. 1) followed by a thin thread of melody spun out of the Freia and the Slumber Motives (syst. 2, ff.). Siegfried appears over the rocky summit, gazing in amazement on the sight before him. The Fate harmonies come as if echoing his questionings, and the motive of the Enchainment of Love (x, p. 286, syst. 2, p. 287) accompanies them, forming much of the substance of the music that follows. It is interrupted by a strain of Wotan's farewell song to Brünnhilde (p. 287, syst. 1), but regains its supremacy again as he continues to gaze at the sleeper. Finally he bends over her to remove her armor, and cuts its bands with his sword (Sword Motive, p. 289, syst. 2; Renunciation, syst. 3). Startled and astonished at the sight of the first woman he has ever seen, — "That is no man!" he cries, — he starts back, as the motive of Yearning for Love bursts in a torrent from the orchestra (p. 289, syst. 4). Now first, truly, he learns what fear is, and the quick rush of his emotions is embodied in a transformation and union of the themes of the Woes of the Volsungs (xxxii, p. 290, syst. 4), here given a new meaning, and of the Yearning for Love. He involuntarily calls on

his mother for help — "A woman lieth here asleep!" he murmurs, and Brünnhilde's Slumber Motive is murmured as gently in the orchestra (p. 293, syst. 1); she has taught him to fear; the Freia Motive appears (syst. 2). How rouse her from her slumber? He bends over her and impresses a kiss upon her mouth. The motive of Renunciation is drawn out in the linked sweetness of thirds to the most delicate pianissimo, yielding to the upward soaring of the Freia Motive. In a long, gradual crescendo the orchestra rises to the broad harmonies of Brünnhilde's Awakening Greeting to the Sun and the light of day. A prominent characteristic of it is the harmonic succession, E minor, C. major, E minor, D minor; and this is followed by a sonorous melody in thirds (p. 296, syst. 4):

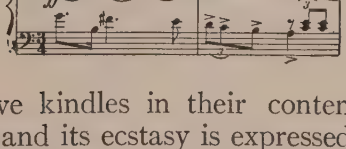
LIX. BRÜNNHILDE'S AWAKENING



This magnificent hymn is of a grandeur that finds few parallels in dramatic literature; and though it is developed with the greatest symphonic power, its true effect is essentially dramatic. This motive leads into the Fate harmonies as Brünnhilde asks what hero has awakened her (p. 298, syst. 1), and Siegfried, as in a trance, answers that he it was, as, beneath insistently

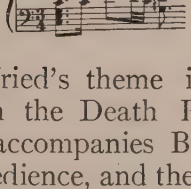
repeated chords in an irregular rhythm, his Heroic Theme breaks through (syst. 3). Then, as he bursts into an ecstasy of thanksgiving, the new theme of the Greeting of Love is added to the score (p. 300, syst. 2):

LX. THE GREETING OF LOVE



Their love kindles in their contemplation of each other; and its ecstasy is expressed in another characteristic theme (p. 301, syst. 3):

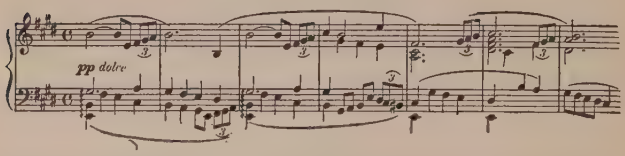
LXI. THE ECSTASY OF LOVE



with which Siegfried's theme is closely united. A measure from the Death Prophecy (xxxix*b*) p. 305, syst. 1) accompanies Brünnhilde's reference to her disobedience, and then comes one from her song of Justification (xliii, p. 305, syst. 4); for Brünnhilde is thinking regretfully of her lost immortality (Valkyrie Motive, p. 308, syst. 4), and is terrified by Siegfried's passionate pleadings that she quench the fire that glows in his breast. In Valhalla all the heroes bent low before her (Valhalla, p. 313, syst. 3); now her lot is shame! There is a mournful touch of the theme of Renun-

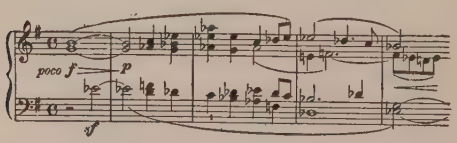
ciation (p. 314, syst. 1), and Siegfried, in the theme of the World's Inheritance (syst. 4) asks her to be to him not the slumbering maid but the wife. The gloomy tones of the Curse are heard (p. 316, syst. 2) as her dread overmasters her. Siegfried calms her fears, and the motive of the World's Inheritance persists (p. 317, syst. 3), till finally her spirit is dissuaded and the new Theme of Peace makes tranquil the spirit of the music (p. 318, syst. 4):

LXII. THEME OF PEACE



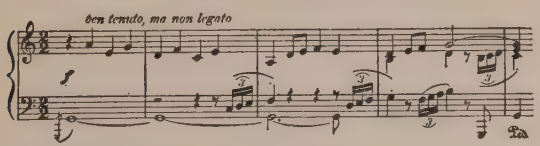
the accompanying figure of which is derived from the Slumber Motive.

This is almost immediately joined to another new motive in praise of Siegfried as the World's Treasure (p. 319, syst. 3):

LXIII. SIEGFRIED, THE WORLD'S TREASURE

Siegfried feels the tumultuous waves of "a glorious flood" within him; and the billows of that flood are represented in the orchestra by a variation of that diminished form of the heroic Volsung Theme that has previously expressed his bewilder-

ment at his first approach to Brünnhilde; or, as some consider it, a variant of the theme of Strenuous Activity (p. 323, syst. 3).

The passionate pleadings of the hero break down the woman's dread, till finally she herself acknowledges the surging flood, the raging fire within her — does he not fear her, the mad, furious maid? she asks in a vocal phrase that is the motive of Siegfried, the Volsung; while the impetuous Valkyrie theme is hurled forth by the orchestra (p. 330, syst. 2, 3,). The orchestra takes the Volsung's phrase from her mouth, as she embraces him impetuously. The Bird twitters merrily, as Siegfried declares that he has lost again all his fear; and presently comes a new theme, denoting their final union, the theme of Love's Resolve (p. 333, syst. 4):

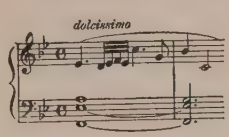
LXIV. THEME OF LOVE'S RESOLVE

Brünnhilde throws herself into Siegfried's arms; and with a magnificent crescendo in passionate power, in an outpouring of the ecstasy, the drama is closed.

IV. THE DUSK OF THE GODS.

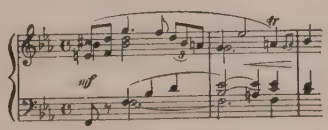
It is night upon the Valkyrie's rock. The three Norns sit there, winding the skein of the world's destinies in the gloom. They sing, telling of the destruction by Wotan of the World's Ash Tree from which he cut his spear, and under which once they wove. The ash tree withered and died; the spear, with its runes of treaties in the shaft, was shattered; Wotan bade the heroes of Valhalla cut the tree and pile it around the castle; and when it burns, the castle will fall in ruins and with it the might of the gods. This prelude to the drama is a wonderful piece of dark tone-picturing, filled with a feeling of nameless dread. The opening is based on the harmonic progressions of Brünnhilde's Awakening, between which comes the figure of the Primeval Element, and above it the Norn's Theme, then, as if in questioning, the Theme of Fate (p. 2, syst. 1). Further progress of the piece discloses a measured version of Loge's Fire Motive (p. 2, syst. 4), the Valhalla Motive (p. 5, syst. 1), the Compact Theme (syst. 3), Dusk of the Gods (p. 6, syst. 1), the Might of the Gods (p. 7, syst. 1), the Ring (p. 10, syst. 4), as the final result of its curse, the downfall of the Gods, is spoken of, Loge's Motive in its original form (p. 12, syst. 4), the Twilight harmonies (p. 15, syst. 3), Alberich's Cry of Triumph (p. 17, syst. 2), Siegfried's Horn Call (syst. 4), the Curse (p. 18, syst. 1), each with its own reference

to the underlying causes of world-shattering events of which the Norns sung. Their skein breaks, their wisdom is at an end, and with the Curse Motive, the Twilight Motive, and the Theme of Fate, they sink out of sight, returning to Mother Erda (p. 19). The day begins to dawn, and its coming is shown forth by one of Wagner's wonderful nature-pictures, bringing warmth and color after the gray mystery of the Norns. There is an expanded and dignified version of Siegfried's Horn Call that now and hereafter is referable to Siegfried, the Hero (p. 19, syst. 3, 4), and then a new motive appears, characteristic of Brünnhilde, the woman (p. 20, syst. 1).

LXV. BRÜNNHILDE'S MOTIVE



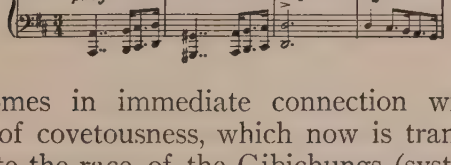
With the full daybreak appear Siegfried, fully armed, and Brünnhilde, leading her horse, and we learn the new Heroic Siegfried Motive, and the Valkyrie Motive in close companionship (p. 21, syst. 1). Brünnhilde sends forth her hero to new deeds of valor. She has given him all her knowledge, all she has. Another new motive voices her Heroic Love (p. 21, syst. 4):

LXVI. BRÜNNHILDE'S HEROIC LOVE

derived from that variant of the Heroic Motive of the Volsungs, that so frequently accompanied Siegfried's early passion in the preceding drama. The Greeting of Love is heard (p. 22, syst. 4), but it is chiefly from the last two with the broadened Horn Call (p. 23, syst. 4; p. 25, syst. 2, ff.) that this superb and impassioned scene of farewell is developed. Siegfried gives her his ring as a pledge (Ring Motive, p. 29, syst. 2; p. 30, syst. 2), and she returns the gift with Grane, her horse (Valkyrie Motive, p.30 , syst. 3, 4, etc.; Ride Motive, p. 31, syst. 3). Siegfried's Song of Wandering is suggested (p. 33, syst. 3; p. 35, syst. 1), and comes at length more frequently forward. As they finally part, a long orchestral interlude begins, which pictures Siegfried's journey up the Rhine, an immensely animated and picturesque description, in which the chief components are Siegfried's Song of Wandering, Brünnhilde's Theme, the Greeting of Love, Siegfried's Horn Call, the Flight Motive (as it appears joined with that of Siegfried's Love, in The Valkyrie, p. 39, syst. 3), Loge's Dancing Flames (p. 40, syst. 4); then, the billowy figure of the Primeval Element (p. 41, syst. 5), Praise of the Rhine Gold (p. 43, syst. 1), the Rhine Gold fanfare (syst. 2), Renunciation (syst. 4), the Ring (p. 44, syst. 1), and the Rhine Gold fanfare, repeated, is answered by Alberich's baleful Cry of Triumph (p. 44, syst. 4).

Here closes the prelude, and the curtain parts upon the first scene, showing the Hall of the Gibichungs, on the bank of the Rhine. There are

Gunther, Gutrune and their half brother Hagen, Black Alberich's swarthy son, whose works of darkness are suggested by the Hagen Motive (p. 45, syst. 1). One of the most significant and frequently recurring features of which is the interval of the "tritone" in the bass (D–g♯):

LXVII. HAGEN'S MOTIVE

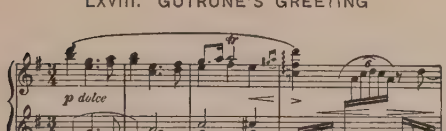


It comes in immediate connection with the motive of covetousness, which now is transferred to denote the race of the Gibichungs (syst. 2, ff.). Hagen urges the necessity of a wife for Gunther, a husband for Gutrune, to enhance the lustre of the family name. Freia's Motive is suggested (p. 47, syst. 1, 3,): Brünnhilde he mentions for Gunther, and with the mention are associated the Valkyrie Motive (p. 47, syst. 4), the Fire chromatics (p. 48, syst. 1), and a snatch of the Bird's song (syst. 2, 3,), Siegfried alone could win her (Heroic Theme of the Volsungs, p. 49, syst. 1; the Horn Call, and Sword motive, syst. 3). For Gutrune he chooses Siegfried, and he tells them of his deeds, for which the appropriate and familiar themes are employed (the Dragon, p. 50, syst. 3; the Sword, syst. 4; the Ring, p. 51, syst. 1; Rhine Gold fanfare, syst. 2; Alberich's Cry of Triumph, syst. 3; Valkyrie, syst. 3). By trickery and magic can Brünnhilde be won for Gunther.

Hagen has a potion, and as he describes its love spell, the Freia Motive is heard (p. 54, syst. 3), the Tarnhelm Motive (p. 55, syst. 1), and the first suggestion of a motive later to appear in more characteristic form, as referring to Hagen's potion (Theme of Deception by Magic, lxx, p. 55, syst. 2). Gunther is enthusiastic over the scheme. Siegfried's approach affords the opportunity to carry it through. His Horn Call comes from a distance (p. 56, syst. 2, ff.), and the Praise of the Rhine Gold (p. 58, syst. 3), now and again united, and then a vigorous statement of the Ring Motive (p. 59, syst. 4). To Hagen's hail Siegfried answers, accompanied by the motive of the Gibichungs (p. 60, syst. 2), and Hagen's cry of welcome is ominously sounded above the Curse Motive (p. 61, syst. 2). Siegfried lands, and his horse is cared for by Hagen.

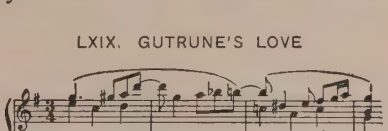
Siegfried's answer proffers his life and his sword (Heroic Theme of the Volsungs, p. 65, syst. 1; the Ecstasy of Love, syst. 2; the Forging Themes, Smithy Motive, Sword Motive, syst. 3). Hagen asks if he is not the possessor of the Nibelung's treasure (Smithy, Rising Hoard, syst. 4). Siegfried admits it, but makes light of it. The Tarnhelm he has, not knowing its use, which Hagen forthwith tells him (Tarnhelm, p. 67, syst. 1), and then reminds him of the Ring (Ring, syst. 3), which he has given to Brünnhilde (Heroic Love, lxvi, syst. 3). Now comes Gutrune carrying a drinking horn with Hagen's potion and the orchestra discloses the motive of Gutrune's Greeting (p. 68, syst. 2).

LXVIII. GUTRUNE'S GREETING



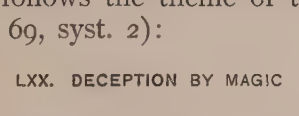
immediately connected with her Theme of Love:

LXIX. GUTRUNE'S LOVE



She offers him the potion, and murmuring his devotion to Brünnhilde, he drinks it to her (Greeting of Love, the World's Heritage, p. 69, syst. 1). Immediately follows the theme of the Deception by Magic (p. 69, syst. 2):

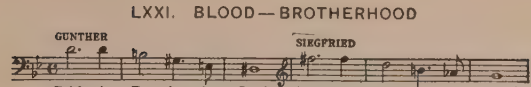
LXX. DECEPTION BY MAGIC



closely analogous with the vague Tarnhelm harmonies. At once Brünnhilde vanishes from his mind, and looking upon Gutrune with a sudden burst of passion, he addresses her in vehement strains, to an orchestral passage developed from the theme of Gutrune's Greeting. Alberich's Curse sounds warningly (p. 72, syst. 1), and as

Siegfried asks Gunther if he has a wife, Brünnhilde's Motive faintly ascends from the orchestra (syst. 2). No, is Gunther's reply (Valkyrie Motive, syst. 3), and he hopes to win the one on whom he has set his heart. Whom can he not win, replies Siegfried, with him as his friend? and we hear the theme of the Ecstasy of Love (syst. 4). And as Gunther tells of her mountain home and the surrounding wall of fire, Loge's chromatics and the Bird's song are sounded, and the Magic Deception keeps all remembrance from Siegfried's mind (p. 73, syst. 3). Siegfried fears no fire (Loge's Motive, p. 74, syst. 1, etc.), and Gunther shall have this maid if he gives him Gutrune for his wife. By the Tarnhelm's power he will beguile her. The Curse Motive casts its shadow (p. 75, syst. 3), the Fire Theme flickers again, the Sword Theme rings out (p. 76, syst. 2). They agree to swear Blood-Brotherhood, and the Compact Motive confirms their agreement (syst. 3). The ceremony is picturesque, of immemorial antiquity, performed over a horn of wine that Hagen brings, each dropping a drop of his own blood into it from a cut he makes in his arm. The characteristic dissonant "tritone" in the bass of Hagen's Motive recurs through this scene, with ominous significance (p. 76, syst. 5; p. 77, syst. 2, etc.) — especially since he himself takes no part in it, — as does Alberich's Curse (p. 78, syst. 3, etc.). The theme of Compact lends its weight of authority (p. 77, syst. 3, etc.). The theme to which Gunther and Siegfried sing the formula is this (p. 77, syst. 3):

LXXI. BLOOD—BROTHERHOOD

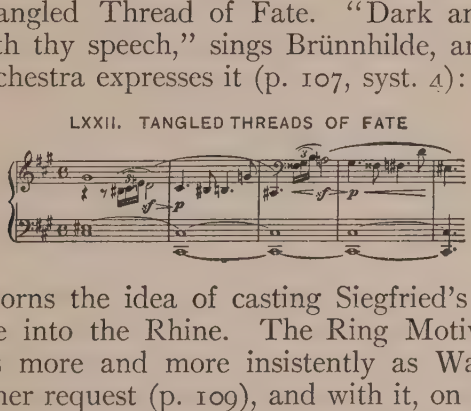

GUNTHER
SIEGFRIED
Bricht ein Bru der den Bund: Trügt den Treu - en der Freund,
Broke if o'er the bond: false if friend be to friend,

Especially to be noted here is the emphatic downward stroke that is used in connection with it, now a fifth (as at p. 76, syst. 5, and p. 79, syst. 1), followed, same line, by the interval of Hagen's tritone, but most characteristically an octave, as at p. 78, syst. 4. This octave frequently recurs in future references to this matter.

The two start at once to fetch the bride, the Hagen, Valkyrie, Gutrune, and Loge Motives accompanying their embarcation on Siegfried's boat. Hagen seats himself to guard the entrance to the hall. The strange tritone sounds heavily in the bass, the Horn Call is given a new, ominous turn in a diminished seventh chord, and the syncopations of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction continue their monotonous beat, as he sits on his guard and reflects on the coming of Brünnhilde, with the Ring. Alberich's Cry of Triumph adds its lowering strains (p. 84, syst. 4; p. 85, syst. 2), and the themes of Siegfried, the Valkyrie (syst. 2; syst. 4), and of Renunciation (p. 86, syst. 2, 4), the Rhine Gold fanfare (syst. 3), the Ring (p. 87, syst. 2) unite to make this gloomy interlude, during which the curtain is drawn. Brünnhilde's Motive (p. 88, syst. 3, 5), the Greeting of Love (syst. 4, 6), and strains of the motive of Brünnhilde's Awakening (p. 88, syst. 6; p. 89, syst. 4) lead to the next scene, showing us Brünnhilde seated on her rock, gazing silently at Siegfried's ring on her finger.

The theme of Siegfried, the World's Treasure (p. 90, syst. 1) gives voice to her thoughts. The galloping figure of the Valkyries (p. 90, syst. 1; p. 90, syst. 2, etc.), the Valkyrie Motive (syst. 3), the Cry (syst. 4), the rush of descending chromatic sixth chords (p. 91, syst. 1) all notify the coming of one of the sisterhood, and in a storm cloud rides Waltraute. A rush of motives from "The Valkyrie" and "Siegfried" floods Brünnhilde's eager questioning of her sister, and her relation of what has befallen her. But for nothing of this has Waltraute come. She has direful tidings of Wotan and Valhalla. The motive of Wotan's Grim Humor rules much of her recital (p. 99, syst. 2, etc.). No more are the Wish Maidens sent to the field of battle; through the world wandered Wotan (motive of the God's Plight, p. 100, syst. 4). His spear was splintered (Compact, p. 101, syst. 2) when he returned (Valhalla). The World's Ash Tree he had cut down and piled before the castle (motive of the God's Might, p. 102, syst. 1), and there he sits, grave and mute, surrounded by his heroes (broadened Valhalla Theme, p. 102, syst. 2, etc.; Fate Motive, p. 103, syst. 2). The Golden Apples he no more tastes (Golden Apples, xiii, p. 103, syst. 3). Forth from Valhalla he sends his ravens, seeking tidings (Alberich's Cry of Triumph, p. 104, syst. 2, 3, 4). Round his knees cower the Valkyries (in Wotan's Grim Humor, syst. 4). Then he remembers Brünnhilde — a strain from his farewell song is heard (p. 105, syst. 2) — and sighs, speaks the words, if ever the River Maidens win from

her hands again the Ring, free from the Curse would be the god and the world. (Praise of the Rhine Gold, p. 105, syst. 2; Ring, syst. 2; Alberich's Curse, syst. 3; Valhalla, syst. 4). It is with this prayer that she comes to Brünnhilde — give up the Ring, end all the grief of the gods (Renunciation, p. 107, syst. 1). But Brünnhilde will hear nothing of all this — evil fancies, they are; and the Grim Humor of Wotan is transferred to her (p. 107, syst. 1). From the Compact Motive is evolved another with an important part to play in "The Dusk of the Gods," that may be called the Tangled Thread of Fate. "Dark and wild seemeth thy speech," sings Brünnhilde, and thus the orchestra expresses it (p. 107, syst. 4):

LXXII. TANGLED THREADS OF FATE

She scorns the idea of casting Siegfried's pledge of love into the Rhine. The Ring Motive now sounds more and more insistently as Waltraute urges her request (p. 109), and with it, on Brünnhilde's part, are heard strains of her Awakening Motive (p. 109, syst. 1), the theme of the World's Heritage (p. 110, syst. 4), then her own motive (p. 111, syst. 2) and the motive of Love's Greeting (syst. 3) as Brünnhilde hymns the praises of the Ring and the preciousness of Siegfried's love, which it represents to her. The music is worked up into a development of the themes of Grim

Humor (p. 111, syst. 3), Renunciation (p. 112, syst. 1, 2), the Ring (syst. 3), the Curse (p. 112, syst. 4; p. 113, syst. 1); and amidst the wild Valkyrie Motives Waltraute rushes away in anguish.

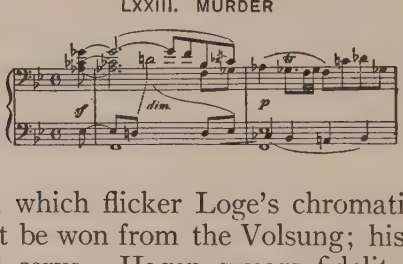
This, then, is the second tragic fault of Brünnhilde which speedily works for her sorrow and her downfall. Evening comes on, and as she sits thoughtfully, the fire light blazes up again around her mountain (Magic Fire, p. 116). It must be that Siegfried approaches, and she starts up in delight (Siegfried's Motive, p. 117, syst. 3; Horn Call, syst. 4), to meet him. But as Siegfried bursts through the wall of flame she draws back in terror. The Tarnhelm has given him the form and appearance of Gunther. "Betrayed," she cries, and the mystic harmonies of the Tarnhelm are sounded, followed by the correlative Magic Deception, and then the Gibichung Motive (p. 119, syst. 2, 3). Siegfried, all memory of Brünnhilde blotted from his mind by the power of Hagen's potion, announces that he is Gunther, come as her wooer, whom she must follow, and Brünnhilde bursts out into imprecations against the faithless Wotan, as she deems him, for relaxing the protecting power of the fiery walls around her. Springing toward her (Hagen's bass, the syncopations of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction, are heard leading into the Tarnhelm and Magic Deception harmonies) Siegfried tells her she must be his bride (motive of the Menial, p. 123, syst. 1, 2): he wrests the ring from her, resisting violently, and drags her fainting to the entrance of the cave. Alberich's Cry of Triumph

(p. 124, syst. 2), the Ring, the Valkyrie, the Curse, finally the theme of the World's Heritage and Brünnhilde's own motive, accompany the struggle, by which she is forced to be Gunther's bride. The syncopated beats of the Destructive Work of the Nibelung are as the panting breath of the exhausted woman. Siegfried follows her into the cave, drawing his sword that shall lie between them that night, preserving his faith with his blood-brother, as the resounding octaves that accompanied the theme of the Blood-Brotherhood and the Sword Motive, connected with the motive of Compact, are heard (p. 127, syst. 2); then Gutrune's Motive, (syst. 4), the Sword (p. 128, syst. 1), the pompous octave, the Tarnhelm, the Magic Deception. Brünnhilde's Motive, sadly in minor, recalls the joyous first night on Siegfried's breast; and the end comes in the mysterious harmonies of the Tarnhelm. The malignant work of Hagen is accomplished. The Volsung, swayed by the magic of his potion, has betrayed his bride, for Gunther, who knows not that Brünnhilde is already the wife of another.

The second act opens under the baleful influences of the Nibelung and his son. The beating syncopations of the Nibelung's Work of Destruction, the heavy fall of Hagen's discordant bass, and Alberich's Cry of Triumph, sound through the night, where Hagen still sits, guarding the Hall, in full armor, but asleep. Alberich crouches before him and addresses him in his sleep. His hatred of all joy is suggested by the motive of Renunciation (p. 132, syst. 3), as he urges him to

hate the happy, to be crafty, strong and bold; tells him of his plight, the theft of the Ring; how Wotan lost dominion through the Volsungs (distorted Valhalla Theme, p. 134, syst. 4), and how the gods must all fall. They two will win the world, if Hagen's faith remains true; and with this comes the new motive of Murder (p. 135, syst. 3):

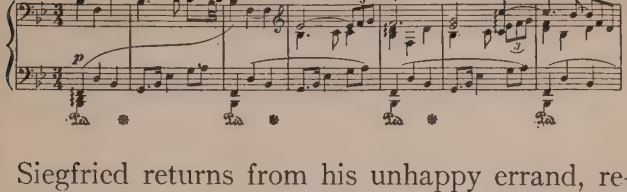
LXXIII. MURDER



Around which flicker Loge's chromatics. The Ring must be won from the Volsung; his undoing alone will serve. Hagen swears fidelity and Alberich disappears. The Ring motive, Siegfried's Horn Call, the motive of Renunciation, the Theme of Murder, the frequently recurring syncopations, the Rhine Daughters (p. 138, syst. 1), the Giants (p. 138, syst. 3, 4), make up the musical substance of the scene. Alberich summons Hagen to swear to him, with the distorted Valhalla Motive (p. 139, syst. 3). Alberich himself swears by his own Curse (p. 140, syst. 2), and his injunction to fidelity, "Be true!" brings back the motive of the Menial (syst. 4).

Day dawns, and the gloomy motives of the malignant intriguers give way to music of a more cheerful quality. The theme is that of the Awakening Day (p. 141, syst. 3):

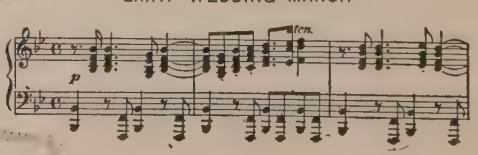
LXXIV. THE AWAKENING DAY

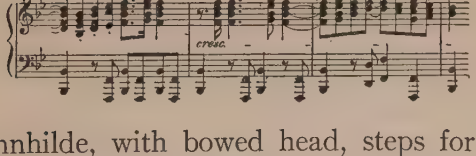


Siegfried returns from his unhappy errand, recounting his success on Brünnhilde's Rock, and asking for Gutrune (motive of Gutrune's Greeting, p. 143, syst. 1, 3, etc.). He relates his adventures to her. (The Magic Fire, the Gibichung, the Valkyrie, the Tarnhelm, the Magic Deception are chiefly in evidence, with the motive of Yearning for Love as an accompaniment figure, p. 144, syst. 2, etc.). He quiets her scruples as to his night with Brünnhilde, after her somewhat circumstantial examination of him, by pointing to his sword, which lay between them, as the decisive octaves of the Blood-Brotherhood theme ring out. Hagen discerning the boat bearing Gunther and Brünnhilde (motive of the Awakening Day, p. 149, syst. 1), Gutrune goes to prepare a welcome for her brother's bride (Gutrune's Love Motive, syst. 4), and Hagen blows his cow horn to assemble the vassals of the Gibichungs for the coming wedding feast. The motive here is a section of the theme of the Awakening Day, yet with the sinister inflection that Hagen's influence gives it, through that strange recurring dissonant interval. Hagen calls to arms, to meet coming need — which is the joyous wedding ceremony impending. (The Motive of the Dusk of the

Gods, p. 152, syst. 1, points to impending catastrophe.) The vassals gather with uncouth cries, and the chorus that ensues is a wonderful piece of boisterous, humorous barbarity, of a piece with the scene and the surroundings. An accompaniment figure is employed here (p. 159, syst. 1) which, while it has a reminder of the Gibichung Motive in transformed rhythms, points also to the orchestral accompaniment to Siegfried's song at the anvil. It passes into the Gibichung Motive (p. 157, syst. 1). A phrase from Gutrune's Love Motive is frequently used here and later as a Wedding Call (as on p. 158, syst. 2). Hagen calls for offerings to the gods (and the phrase is a reminiscence of Mime's smooth compliments and self-appreciation to Siegfried, p. 163, syst. 3), also for a carousal, at which the vassals break into uproarious laughter and unite in a great chorus of greeting, preluded by Hagen's characteristic figure (p. 167, syst. 1) and based on a phrase from the theme of the Awakening Day (p. 168, syst. 1), and the Wedding Call variant of Gutrune's Greeting (syst. 4). Through a magnificent crescendo this is worked up and carried over into a swelling wedding march that greets the arrival of Gunther and his unwilling bride, Brünnhilde, in their boat (p. 175, syst. 3):

LXXV. WEDDING MARCH



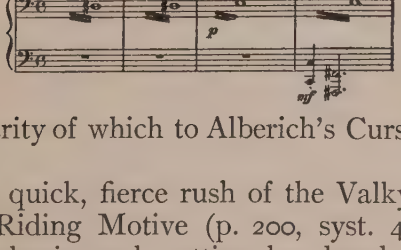


Brünnhilde, with bowed head, steps forth, led by Gunther, who presents her to the vassals. The Valkyrie Motive is ominously suggested (p. 177, syst. 1; p. 179, syst. 1); the Wedding Call with rich chromatic harmony and Brünnhilde's Motive are brought together in alternation (p. 179, syst. 2). Brünnhilde has not yet looked up; but as Gunther pronounces the words "Gutrune and Siegfried" the orchestra bursts out in a sudden climax and crash, and Brünnhilde raises her head, fixing her gaze on Siegfried in astonishment. Pianissimo, the Fate harmonies throw their baleful suggestion upon the situation (p. 180, syst. 3). All are astonished; some wonder softly what ails her. "Siegfried here?" she asks. He tranquilly replies that he has won Gunther's sister, as Gunther has won her. "He lies," she cries, and is as one in a swoon. The Fate Motive sounds (p. 181, syst. 4). Brünnhilde's own motive accompanies her anguished whisper, "Siegfried knows me not." She sees the ring upon his finger (Ring, Curse and Renunciation Motives, p. 184, syst. 3, 4), and with suppressed excitement she asks how it came there, since it was wrested from her not by him, but by Gunther — for so Siegfried seemed to her, through the Tarnhelm's magic (the Nibelung's Work of Destruction is indicated through all this passage, p. 183). Gunther, in great perplexity,

says he gave Siegfried nothing (Magic Deception, p. 184, syst. 4: Rhine Gold fanfare in minor, p. 185, syst. 2). Now Brünnhilde's rage flames up: Ha, she cries; Siegfried it was who robbed her — Siegfried the traitor and thief: (Motive of the Tangled Threads of Fate (p. 186, syst. 1). No, he replies, he won it from a dragon. (Praise of the Rhine Gold, Giants, Rhine Daughters, p. 186, syst. 4; p. 187, syst. 1). If Brünnhilde knows the ring, and it is the one Gunther took from her, then it is his, and Siegfried has it by guile, for which he must atone — so argues Hagen, almost laying his hand upon the accomplishment of his father's purpose (Curse, p. 187, syst. 3; Deception by Magic, syst. 4). Brünnhilde bursts out with a storm of denunciation of the shameful betrayal, and the Ring Motive descends as in a flood. Her outburst is further accompanied by the Valhalla Motive (p. 190, syst. 1), a fragment of her Justification (syst. 2), the Flight Motive (p. 191, syst. 1) and a passage of chord formations based on the successions of the Twilight Motive, as it appeared when Wotan cast her into her magic sleep (p. 191, syst. 3, 4). Vehemently she pushes aside Gunther with his attempts to calm her (the accompaniment to the vassal's charms reappears here p. 192, syst. 2; and the Tangled Threads of Fate, syst. 3) and proclaims to all present that Siegfried is her husband -- he forced from her delight and love (Renunciation, p. 193, syst. 3; Tangled Threads of Fate, p. 194, syst. 1, 2). Siegfried denies it. His plighted Blood-Brotherhood (the octaves) Nothung, (Sword and Compact Motives,

p. 194, syst. 4) which lay between them, parted them in honor. (Tangled Threads of Fate, p. 195, syst. 2). Brünnhilde declares that Nothung hung on the wall in its sheath, when its lord won his true love (Brünnhilde's Heroic Love, p. 195, syst. 2, etc.). Profound sensation among the vassals; all urge Siegfried to cast the slander from him with an oath. The phrase of Blood-Brotherhood is twice repeated (p. 198, syst. 4; p. 199, syst. 1), with an emphatically broadened version of the Theme of the Tangled Threads of Fate, and Siegfried swears upon the point of Hagen's spear to these strains (p. 199, syst. 2):

LXXVI. THE OATH



the similarity of which to Alberich's Curse is to be observed.

With a quick, fierce rush of the Valkyrie's Cry and the Riding Motive (p. 200, syst. 4) Brünnhilde breaks in and putting her hand upon the spear point swears her oath, that by that spear point he shall perish, for broken are all his vows. The chorus cries out, and after a fiery recapitulation of Brünnhilde's Heroic Love (p. 203, syst. 3) more calmly continued as Siegfried recommends rest and quiet for the "untamed mountain maid," (with a suggestion of the motive of Reflection p.

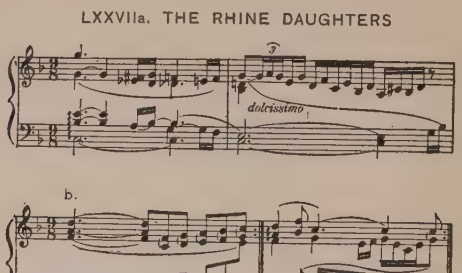
205, syst. 2), he calls for the feast to go on with the Wedding Call (p. 206, syst. 4) which is developed with grandiose sonority. He goes off with Gutrune, followed by the vassals, leaving Gunther and Hagen behind, with Brünnhilde. The music takes a gloomier color, as Brünnhilde gazes sadly after the couple; the Renunciation Theme (p. 208, syst. 5) and the syncopations of Nibelung's Work of Destruction are united with the harmonies of the theme of the Deception by Magic (p. 209, syst. 1), and the spectre of the motive of Murder is outlined (p. 209, syst. 2, 3) followed by the Fate harmonies (syst. 5). Brünnhilde sadly wonders what wisdom she has for this riddle — all her wisdom she has given him (theme of the World's Heritage, p. 210, syst. 2). The motive of Murder bursts out as a despairing cry (p. 211, syst. 3) followed by the motive of the Menial joined with Hagen's Theme in the bass (syst. 4). These two are now used together as a motive indicative of the league of revenge in which Hagen seeks to enlist Brünnhilde's aid. The motive of the Oath (p. 212, syst. 1), accompanies his suggestion, to which she at first answers in scorn that a glance from his eye would wither all his courage; a state of mind subtly bodied forth by the theme of the World's Heritage, in strange, new harmonies (syst. 3) together with the Magic Deception. He knows Siegfried's might; but she shall tell him his vulnerable point. She has thrown a protecting spell about the hero (theme of the Ecstasy of Love, p. 214, syst. 3) yet (Destructive Work of the Nibelung) if he

strikes at his back — (League of Revenge, p. 216, syst. 2). He turns to Gunther, who bewails his lot (motive of Renunciation p. 219, syst. 3), telling him that naught will avail for his honor but Siegfried's death (Murder Motive, syst. 4). The oath of Blood-Brotherhood restrains him; but Hagen declares that Siegfried betrayed him, and adds as a further argument that the possession of the ring would give him dominion over all the world. The thought of Gutrune, Siegfried's spouse, gives him pause (Gutrune's two motives, p. 223, syst. 4); Hagen suggests a boar hunt, wherein the hero may come to his death. Gunther is persuaded (League of Revenge, p. 225, syst. 4), and the three vow together that Siegfried shall die. The sinister music voicing their death dealing plans is suddenly interrupted by the jubilation of the bridal procession issuing from the hall; this harsh contrast is continued to the speedy close of the act, — the Wedding Call with the motive of Murder; and upon the harsh strains of the latter the curtain drops.

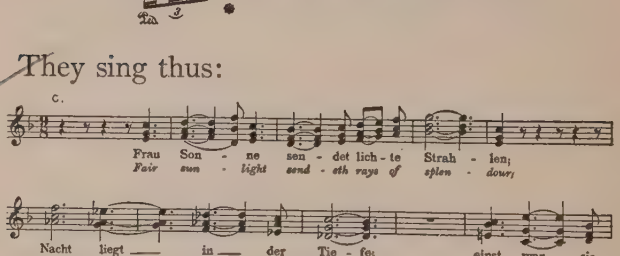
The third act opens upon a wild valley on the Rhine. The boar hunt is to come; Siegfried's clear call is heard, and with it Hagen's, in the stubborn semitone of the motive of the Menial. This gives place to the flowing measures of the Primeval Element, and the Praise of the Rhine Gold. The fanfare of the Rhine Gold cuts through it (p. 232, syst. 5). The three Rhine Maidens are disporting themselves in the stream, and the orchestra sets forth a prelude to that incomparably graceful and melodious trio in which

they sing their joys and their regretful memories of the lost gold. The picture is first of their swimming. Its chief elements are these:

LXXVIIa. THE RHINE DAUGHTERS



They sing thus:


Frau Son - ne sen - det lich - te Strah - len;
Fair sun - light send - eth rays of splen - dour;
Nacht liegt in der Tie - fe; einst war sie
night lies in the wa - ters. Bright were they
hell da heil und hehr des Va-ters Gold noch im ihr glanz tel
once when through the waves the ra-diant sun gleamed on the Rhine gold.

Siegfried's Horn Call indicates his approach; he has wandered away from his companions in the hunt, and stands on the bank looking at the water nixies, who banter him, asking what he would give them if they promised him a bag. "Ask what ye will," he answers (Rhine Gold fanfare, p. 246, syst. 5). The ring on his finger, they say, as the

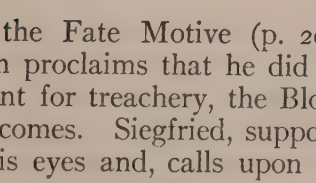
Ring Motive points their reply (p. 247, syst. 1), and when he refuses, accuse him of miserliness. Siegfried is a bit annoyed at this, and is about to throw them the ring, when they gravely tell him to keep it, till the ill fate it brings has reached him, when he will fain be freed by them from its Curse (Curse Motive, p. 255, syst. 2; motive of the Menial, p. 256, syst. 1; Smithy, syst. 2; Praise of the Rhine Gold, syst. 2). Only the stream can stay it (Dusk of the Gods, p. 257, syst. 2). But Siegfried will not be frightened into doing what he was willing to do of his own accord, and puts the ring back upon his finger. Again they warn him of the curse woven by the Norns, and that Weaving Motive, as it appeared in the prelude of the drama, briefly returns. The sisters sing of the blindness of Siegfried — oaths he swore and heeded not; runes he reads, and recks not; a glorious gift was his — that he lost it he knows not. A proud woman will that day his wealth inherit — she will heed their prayer. They disappear with the Curse Motive. At once Hagen's horn is heard, which Siegfried answers with his, as the hunting party comes up to rest and prepare a meal. The activity of the scene is accompanied by a development of Siegfried's Horn Call, the Wedding Call, the Rhine Daughter's song (p. 275) the Gibichung Motive (p. 277, syst, 1, etc.); and as Siegfried speaks of the Rhine Daughters' warning that he should that day be slain, the combination of themes in the League of Revenge is heard (p. 278, syst. 3). Siegfried offers drink to Gunther to cheer his darkling spirit (Wedding

Call, p. 279, syst. 4; Blood-Brotherhood, p. 280, syst. 1), but Gunther looks at it with horror; and the tricky Loge's figure plays about the situation. Hagen suggests that Siegfried can understand the speech of birds (p. 282, Bird song, syst. 2), and to divert the gloomy Gunther, Siegfried offers to tell him the wondrous adventures of his boyhood. Siegfried's tale brings before us a vision of all the vivid and picturesque happenings from the first pages of "Siegfried," with a richly suggestive recapitulation of the appropriate themes; the Smithy Motive; Mime's crooning song (p. 204, syst. 2), the Sword Motive and the Nothung phrase (syst. 3), the motive of Reflection and the Dragon Motive. Under a whispering violin arpeggio figure comes the theme of the Woes of the Volsungs (p. 285, syst. 2), then the Sounds of the Forest (p. 286, syst. 3), and Siegfried sings the tune of the Bird's Song (p. 287, syst. 1). When Siegfried reaches the death of Mime, in his story, Hagen secretly drops a magic juice into his drinking horn, and bids the hero drink of it, telling him that it will refresh his remembrance — it is a juice to take away the forgetfulness of the magic draught. The uncanny harmonies of the Tarnhelm (p. 291, syst. 1), and of the Deception (syst. 2) follow, and at once Brünnhilde's theme is heard as though the first sign of his returning memory. He goes on to tell of the Bird's counsel and guidance of him toward Brünnhilde's rock, of his awakening of the sleeping Valkyrie, and with Siegfried's access of ecstasy in the telling, the theme of Fate (p. 294, syst. 3), and an enriched

version of the Slumber Motive (syst. 4), pass through the orchestra. Finally with the themes of the World's Heritage and the Awakening of Brünnhilde (p. 295, syst. 3), he reaches in rapture the climax of his story — "then, like flames of fire enfolded me beauteous Brünnhilde's arms!"

Gunther starts up in dismay. The Curse Motive with the motive of the Menial in the bass (p. 296, syst. 2) crash through the orchestra. Wotan's fateful ravens fly by, and as Siegfried starts up to look at them, Hagen, with a great cry of "Vengeance is their decree," thrusts his spear into the hero's back. In a wild outburst Siegfried's Heroic Theme, twisted and wrecked in minor dissonant harmonies, rises (syst. 3), as Siegfried turns, swinging his shield on high in an effort to crush his slayer; but his strength fails him, and he falls back upon it himself. All are horrified. Brokenly pulsing through the orchestra, comes a figure that voices the feelings of the assemblage:

LXXVIII. FIGURE OF MOURNING



followed by the Fate Motive (p. 293, syst. 1); and as Hagen proclaims that he did the deed as the punishment for treachery, the Blood-Brotherhood Motive comes. Siegfried, supported by two men, opens his eyes and, calls upon Brünnhilde;

once more the harmonies and the upward rolling arpeggios of Brünnhilde's Awakening greet him, as they did on the fiery summit. Now he pours out his dying soul in a longing, passionate apostrophe to her. The succeeding themes are those of Fate (p. 298, syst. 4), Siegfried the Volsung (p. 299, syst. 1), Love's Greeting (p. 300, syst. 1), Love's Ecstasy (syst. 3); and as the Fate Motive once more is whispered, the hero is dead. The great orchestral interlude that follows, accompanying the funeral procession, is one of the majestic and soul-shattering climaxes of the Trilogy; The Funeral March it is called, and in it are recapitulated all the tragic experiences of the race of Volsungs; as Wolzogen observes, all the sensuous, all the passionate, all the tragical in them is here raised to the higher power of the spiritual. The music speaks through the themes, — connected and transfigured by the Figure of Mourning — of the Woes of the Volsungs (p. 301, syst. 2), the Heroic Theme of the Volsungs (syst. 5; second phrase, p. 302, syst. 2), Sieglinde's Sympathy (p. 302, syst. 2) and her Love; these recalling the origin and the relation of the hero to the fateful circle of events now closing around. Then it reaches a clear, keen, climax in the Sword Motive (p. 303, syst. 1), followed by the theme of Siegfried, the Volsung (syst. 3), and the broadened and ennobled form of the Horn Call that has accompanied him in the prelude of "The Dusk of the Gods" (p. 304, syst. 1). Finally, the tender theme of Brünnhilde brings this mighty tone poem to its close (p. 304, syst. 5). With its passage into

the third scene (representing night in the Hall of the Gibichungs, with the moonlight reflected from the Rhine) come Alberich's Cry of Triumph (p. 305, syst. 1), and the broadened Horn Call in sad, minor harmonies. Gutrune enters; she is disturbed by evil dreams; her motive of Greeting accompanies her in minor harmonies (syst. 3), and the Fate question (syst. 4). The minor version of Siegfried's Horn Call that plays so prominent a part in "The Dusk of the Gods" is insistently repeated, with its premonitions of evil (syst. 3, ff.). Brünnhilde is not in her chamber; she has gone to the shore (Brünnhilde's Motive, syst. 3, and the Tangled Threads of Fate in the bass, syst. 4), Hagen's voice outside with his characteristic motives (p. 307, syst. 3), announces his approach; he calls for torches, calls for Gutrune to greet Siegfried, who no more will wind his horn, no more will fight or hunt or woo winsome women (Blood-Brotherhood Theme, followed by the theme of Renunciation, p. 308, syst. 4). They bring the hero's body and set the bier down in the middle of the hall. A wild boar killed him, declares Hagen; and here there appears (p. 309, syst. 4), a furious downward rushing chromatic figure that appears frequently in the ensuing scene to denote Gutrune's despair. She is beside herself with grief. The rhythmic strokes of the Figure of Mourning sound dully (p. 310, syst. 4). She charges her brother Gunther with the deed, but he directs the blame upon Hagen (Murder Motive, p. 312, syst. 2), who defiantly accepts it (melody of the Oath, syst. 3, Blood-Brotherhood Motive,

syst. 4); and he claims the Ring as his rightful heritage (Ring, p. 313, syst. 3). They fight (Curse motive, p. 314, syst. 1) and Gunther falls by a stroke of Hagen's sword. Rushing forward to tear the ring from Siegfried's finger, the dead man's hand raises itself threateningly toward him and he recoils in horror, as the Sword Motive is intoned by the trumpets. Brünnhilde advances solemnly to the front, accompanied by the downward and upward sweeping progressions of the Gods' Twilight and Norn Motives (p. 314, syst. 4), finally the Fate harmonies (p. 315, syst. 2), silencing the quarrelling querulous lot through the majesty and fearful calm of her grief, coming for vengeance. Children crying to their mother, she has heard, not the lament befitting the highest hero's fame (Siegmund's Death Prophecy, syst. 3). Gutrune's wild outburst she checks — never was she wife of his (themes of Fate and of Gutrune's Greeting, p. 316, syst. 2), and with the theme of the World's Heritage proudly claims that title for herself (syst. 4). Now Gutrune's eyes are opened — she sees for what purpose Hagen poured the poison into Siegfried's drink (motive of the Magic Deception, p. 317, syst. 1, then that of Gutrune's Love, syst. 2).

The Fate Motive and the rhythmic beats of the Figure of Mourning, brood oppressively over the scene. After long contemplation of Siegfried, Brünnhilde turns to the men and women and begins that great address, filled with lofty eloquence of grief, passion, solemn exaltation, the far-seeing vision of a prophetess and seer, that

is the very climax and crown of the whole Trilogy. In it she apostrophizes her hero, his glory, his strength. To the accompaniment of majestic chords the motive of the God's Might roll upward. She bids them kindle a funeral pyre for the hero's body and her own (Fire motive, p. 318, syst. 5; Siegfried the Volsung, p. 319, syst. 1; and the Dusk of the Gods, syst. 2). The music, developed with grandiose power from these motives, then takes a tenderer expression as it passes into the theme of Love's Greeting (p. 321, syst. 3). She celebrates his faith; in wedlock traitor, true in friendship, from his heart's true love he was barred by his sword (Sword motive, p. 322, syst. 4). Truer than his were oaths never spoken, yet bonds he broke — the octaves of the oath are quickly hammered out (p. 324, syst. 1). "Know ye why that was?" she asks, as did the Norns; and the Death Prophecy and the Fate Motive come to point the question. Now she turns to the gods, as the Valhalla Motive sounds, and demands that they look upon her and behold their eternal disgrace (Renunciation theme, in the vocal melody, p. 324, syst. 3; a strain of her theme of Justification is heard in the bass, syst. 4, and developed in the next succeeding passage). All things now she knows — motive of Fate (p. 326, syst. 1) — and now she sends home Wotan's ravens with tidings of the Dusk of the Gods. The next following orchestral passage is wonderfully wrought of the themes of the Curse, the Rhine Gold's Praise, Valhalla, and the God's Plight, as Brünnhilde sings "Rest thou, rest thou, thou god!" (p. 326, syst. 3).

Once more begins the majestic sweep of the motives of the Gods' Might (p. 326, syst. 4), of their Twilight and of the Primeval Element (p. 327, syst. 1), as she signs to the vassals to put Siegfried's body on the pyre they have built. But first she draws the ring from his finger — her heritage (Curse and Ring, p. 327, syst. 2), which she gives away (Rhine Gold's Praise, the Rhine Daughters, their first song in "The Rhine Gold," the Rhine Gold fanfare, the Rhine Daughters again, the Ring, — a wonderful gathering up of correlated themes, p. 327–29). From her ashes shall the Rhine Maidens recover their treasure, purified from its curse by fire.

Putting the ring on her finger she seizes a fire brand (motive of Compact, p. 329, syst. 2) and as she waves it the Fire Motive bursts out. Fly home, she cries to Wotan's ravens; tell him the tidings of the Rhine; but first go to Brünnhilde's rock and bid Loge, burning there, go to Valhalla (Twilight of the Gods, p. 330, syst. 4). The end of the gods is near (Norns, p. 331, syst. 1). She flings the firebrand upon the pyre, and as it blazes up she perceives her horse led forward by two men. (Valkyrie's Cry, and motive with the characteristic rush of trills and chromatic sixths, p. 331, syst. 4; p. 332, syst. 1). Grane too, shall accompany her to her master upon the pyre. Her spirit is raised to a fiery exaltation; and now comes that noble melody, first suggested by Sieglinde in the last act of "The Valkyrie," as Brünnhilde tells her of the hero to be borne by her, the theme of Redemption through Love (p. 333, syst. 2)

which comes to raise the climax of the scene and of the work to its summit of grandiose eloquence. She swings herself upon the horse and together they leap into the flames, which then seize upon the building itself, as the scintillation of the Magic Fire with Loge's theme seem to possess the whole orchestra. The flames die down momentarily, and the Rhine is seen overflowing in a mighty flood. The Rhine Daughters come with the motive of the Praise of the Rhine Gold, up to the very place of the fire, and Hagen, making one last despairing effort to seize the Ring, as the Curse motive is thundered from the bass, plunges madly into the flood (p. 337, syst. 5) and is drawn down by the nixies into the river. The Rhine Daughters' song is sung by the orchestra (p. 338, syst. 3); the Valhalla Theme adds its solemn strains (syst. 4); the theme of Redemption through Love is joined to them (syst. 6). Follows the theme of the Might of the Gods. The hall has fallen into the ruins, and in the distant heavens is seen Valhalla, with the gods, blazing brightly. The theme of the Twilight of the Gods marks their downfall; and with a softer repetition of the theme of Redemption through Love, which marks the passing of the old order and the coming of a new, the great drama is brought to its end.

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